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VORTIGERN;

AN HISTORICAL PLAY;

WITH

AN ORIGINAL PREFACE.

BY

W. H. IRELAND.

REPRESENTED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1796,

AS A SUPPOSED NEWLY-DISCOVERED DRAMA OF

SHAKSPEARE.

LONDON:

JOSEPH THOMAS, BIRCHIN LANE.

1832.

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May. 1873.

BALNE, PRINTER, GRACECHURCH STREET, LONDON.

P R E F A C E.

No one connected with literature, or who feels a partiality for reading, on hearing the title of *Vortigern and Rowena* mentioned, but has more or less a confused idea respecting this dramatic effort; yet when inquiry is made, whether any individual has perused the play, it uniformly occurs, that every one is a total stranger to the production. It would be difficult to ascertain the reason why the present drama should have become of such extreme rarity; but, after a continuance of nine years upon the continent, though incessantly occupied, on my return, in endeavouring to procure a copy, as well as employing an eminent theatrical bookseller in the same pursuit, upwards of four years elapsed ere I obtained copies of my plays of *Vortigern and Rowena* and *Henry the Second*, on which occasion I gladly paid three times the original publication price for their procurement. Appeals to me have been so often made, to know where these dramas could be purchased, that I shall certainly not infringe upon veracity when I state, a limited edition would long ere this have been disposed of, had copies existed to supply such repeated demands. Application has at length been made to me upon the subject of their republication; when, more for the purpose of seizing an opportunity of saying something in vindication of myself, than from any desire to give fresh publicity to these dramas, I am prompted to acquiesce; and they are thus made the vehicle of developing a variety of sentiments at present influencing my mind, as regard the subject of my Shaksperian fabrications.

I shall not trouble myself by entering upon an elaborate detail of the forgery of the papers; any persons feeling at all interested upon that subject, may find ample food for the gratification of such desire, in my "*Confessions*," one volume octavo, published in 1805. Since the appearance of the above work, twenty-seven years have elapsed; and my feelings at the present moment are very differently attuned to what they were when the "*Confessions*" were written. It has been justly remarked, that there exists a time for every thing; and the shafts of persecution have been so relentlessly levelled against me for upwards of thirty years, that I begin to conceive sufficient purgation has been endured, and that every inimical feeling, which now remains, is but the foul lees of rancour, malice, and uncharitableness. However, as most of my readers, from the lapse of time, may be

unable to appreciate the drift of my meaning without a clue, I will, in the most succinct manner possible, make them fully acquainted with the height and sum of my offending, and then proceed to develop the usage of a certain portion of the literary world towards me.

My father, (Mr. Samuel Ireland,) a gentleman gifted with the most open heart and liberal sentiments, chanced, like many others, to be enamoured of the Fine Arts and Vertu; his assortment of pictures, prints, and drawings, was universally extolled; his library well selected; and, above all, his collection of Hogarth's works (not even excepting that of his noble competitor for mastery, the late Earl of Exeter) was not to be surpassed. Among the strongest of his predilections, my father entertained an unbounded enthusiasm for the writings of Shakspeare: four days, at least, out of the seven, the beauties of our divine dramatist became his theme of conversation after dinner; while in the evening, still further to impress the subject upon the minds of myself and sisters, certain plays were selected, and a part allotted to each, in order that we might read aloud, and thereby acquire a knowledge of the delivery of blank verse articulately, and with proper emphasis. The comments to which these rehearsals (if I may be permitted so to call them) gave rise, were of a nature to elicit, in all its bearings, the enthusiasm entertained by my father for the bard of Avon—with him Shakspeare was no mortal, but a divinity; and frequently while expatiating upon this subject, impregnated with all the fervour of Garrick, with whom he had been on intimate terms, my father would declare, that to possess a single vestige of the poet's hand-writing would be esteemed a gem beyond all price, and far dearer to him than his whole collection. At these conversations I was uniformly present, swallowing with avidity the honied poison; when, by way of completing this infatuation, my father, who had already produced Picturesque Tours of some of the British rivers, determined on commencing that of the Avon; and I was selected as the companion of his journey. Of course, no inquiries were spared, either at Stratford or in the neighbourhood, respecting the mighty poet. Every legendary tale, recorded anecdote, or traditionary account, was treasured up; in short, the name of Shakspeare ushered in the dawn; and a bumper, quaffed to his immortal memory at night, sealed up our weary eyelids in repose.

We now approach the grand *denouement*. Having supplied himself with sketches and notes for his Tour, my father returned to town; about two years prior to which, I had commenced a course of studies, to enable me to enter as a practitioner at the Chancery Bar. I will not take upon myself to determine whether nature ever gifted me with a dawning of talent for poetry, or whether I possessed a mere facility at imitation; but the reiterated eulogies rung in my ears respecting Shakspeare—my father's enthusiasm—and, above all, the incessant remark, upon his part, that to possess even a signature of the bard, would make him the happiest of human beings—irrevocably sealed my destiny.

Being in a conveyancer's office, and environed by old deeds, the silly idea struck me of investigating numerous bundles of law documents, in the hope that I might find some instrument signed by Shakspeare; which labour, of course, proving abortive, I had recourse to a dealer in old parchments, whose shop I frequented for weeks, under the same fallacious impression; when, finding all to no purpose, then it was, (as a German amalgamator of the horrific would assert,) that the demon seized his opportunity to place temptation in my way. In fine, wearied by the fruitless toil, in an evil moment, the idea first seized me of the possibility of producing a spurious imitation of Shakspeare's autograph; when, without reflection, having supplied myself with a tracing of the poet's signature, I wrote a mortgage deed, imitating the law hand of James the First, and affixed thereto the sign-manual of Shakspeare. The instrument in question was shown, accredited in all directions, and my father rendered happy; when, without a thought of any thing further, I conceived myself amply recompensed in having been the instrument of producing so much felicity.

Let me now inquire of the reader whether he traces, to the above period, any great mental delinquency in my proceedings? Was I biassed by selfish motives, or could I be charged with any thing but the thoughtless impulse of a head-strong youth, under seventeen years of age, whose only aim was to afford pleasure to a parent? Falsehood, though trivial, is, however, the first step to crime; and although mine was not of a very heinous nature, the sequel will develop what important and injurious consequences may result from a first departure from veracity.

For some days this mortgage deed, purporting to be between Shakspeare, and one Michael Fraser and Elizabeth his wife, was inspected by crowds of antiquaries, and Shaksperian enthusiasts; when, on a sudden, the question was started, concerning where the deed had been found. I was, of course, appealed to; and never having once dreamed of such a question, it was on that occasion the first serious difficulty presented itself to my imagination. *Fallacia aliam trudit*. The tale resorted to was as simple as possible, namely: That I had formed an acquaintance with a gentleman of ancient family, possessed of a mass of deeds and papers relating to his ancestors, who, finding me very partial to the examination of old documents, had permitted me to inspect them; that shortly after commencing my search, the mortgage deed in question had fallen into my hands, which had been presented to me by the proprietor. I added, that the personage alluded to, well aware the name of Shakspeare must create a considerable sensation, and being a very retiring and diffident man, had bound me, by a solemn engagement, never to divulge his name. Such was the manner in which I accounted for becoming possessed of the deed, sincerely trusting that the matter would thenceforward remain buried in eternal oblivion. Your German writer of the marvellous would exclaim: "No, no! it

was then too late: you had fallen into the demon's snare—was spell-bound—within the vortex of his machinations, and incapable of extricating yourself from the impending fate that awaited you:" be this as it may, I was not permitted to continue passive. The late Honourable Mr. Byng, afterwards Lord Torrington; Sir Frederick Eden, Bart.; and a long string of persons, whose names it would be superfluous to annex, gave it as their decided opinions, *that wheresoever I had found the deed, there, no doubt, the mass of papers existed, which had been so long and vainly sought after by the numerous commentators upon Shakspeare.* These assertions, incessantly dinned into my father's ears, were retailed to me with increased vehemence. I was sometimes supplicated; at others, commanded to resume my search among my supposed friend's papers; and not unfrequently taunted, as being an absolute idiot, for suffering such a brilliant opportunity to escape me. Thus circumstanced, I knew not how to act; and cursed the first precipitate measure I had adopted: while, at every meal, when I presented myself, the same alarm was rung in my ears, so that no alternative remained but to attempt something further, or be regarded in the light of a downright fool, not only by my father, but by the numerous personages who had inspected and placed confidence in the mortgage deed. My evil genius predominated: I penned a few letters, and "The Profession of Faith," all of which passed muster; although, in many instances, *the documents produced as two hundred years old, had not been fabricated many hours previous to their production.* For a detailed account of all these forgeries, I refer the reader to my "Confessions," before adverted to; having merely to add, that I ultimately announced the existence of a drama, being guided in this, as in former instances, by the same thoughtless impetuosity: for it will scarcely be credited, that, on hazarding such a bold statement, I literally had never essayed my pen at poetical composition, and had not penned one line of the play which I purposed producing, being no other than the present drama of Vortigern and Rowena. Prior to the completion of this piece, the fame of my various fabrications had resounded from one extremity of the kingdom to the other; and on the completion of the undertaking, strenuous applications were made by the late Mr. Harris, of Covent Garden Theatre, who, in order to possess the play, forwarded a *carte blanche* (by Mr. Wallace, father of the then highly-esteemed actress of that name) to Mr. Samuel Ireland, with which, had my father acquiesced, as that theatre was favoured by the King and the Court, there would have been great probability of its success: however, a long intimacy with the Sheridan and Linley families turned the scale in favour of Drury Lane, where it was subsequently represented. Prior to this period, however, the validity of the papers had begun to be questioned, the late Mr. Malone standing forth as generalissimo of the non-believers. Some pamphlets, *pro and con*, had also issued from the press; while the newspapers incessantly teemed with paragraphs, written on the spur of the moment, and

dictated from the particular sentiments entertained as to the papers by their authors. Malone, in the interim, having collected his mass of documents intended to prove the whole a forgery, committed them to the press, under a hope that he should be able to publish his volumes before the representation of *Vortigern*: the bulkiness of his production, however, having defeated that object, he, on the day the piece was to be performed, issued a notice, to the effect that he had a work on the eve of publication, which would infallibly prove the manuscripts in Mr. Ireland's possession mere fabrications, and warning the people not to be imposed upon by the play advertised for that night's representation, as being from the pen of Shakspeare. My father having procured a copy of this notice, though late in the day, instantly forwarded to the press the following hand-bill, and distributed a vast quantity among the assembled multitudes then choaking up every avenue to Drury Lane Theatre:—

“ VORTIGERN.

“ A malevolent and impotent attack on the Shakspeare MSS. having appeared, on the *eve* of representation of the play of *Vortigern*, evidently intended to injure the interest of the proprietor of the MSS., Mr. Ireland feels it impossible, within the short space of time that intervenes between the publishing and the representation, to produce an answer to the most illiberal and unfounded assertions in Mr. Malone's “ Inquiry”; he is, therefore, induced to request, that the play of *Vortigern* may be heard with that *candour* that has ever distinguished a *British audience*.

“ *The Play is now at the Press, and will, in a very few days, be laid before the public.*”

If, however, an active enemy was found in the person of Mr. Malone, another equally implacable, and enabled to strike a more deadly blow, as regarded the success of my play, appeared in the person of Mr. Kemble, then acting manager of Drury Lane Theatre; who, in that capacity, was of course empowered to direct his whole influence against the piece, of which he did not fail to take advantage, as will appear from my father's preface subjoined, which accompanied the original edition of *Vortigern*. Indeed, so notorious was Mr. Kemble's conduct, in opposition to the interests of the theatre, that, after the termination of the play, Mr. Sheridan, in the green-room, very unceremoniously gave Mr. Kemble to understand, that *he had nothing to do with his (Mr. Kemble's) private opinions respecting the validity or spuriousness of the manuscripts; that he appeared there as a servant of the theatre, whose bounden duty it should have been to exert himself for the purpose of insuring success, instead of invidiously toiling to damn a production, which might have brought thousands to the treasury of that establishment.*” To this address, delivered in my presence, Mr. Kemble uttered not one word in reply.

Six-and-thirty years have now transpired since the drama of *Vortigern* and *Rowena* was performed, (on Saturday, the *second* day of April, 1796). It may be worthy of remark, that the strenuous efforts

of the acting manager, Mr. J. P. Kemble, were not wanting to procure its representation on the *Friday night preceding*, in order to pass upon the audience the compliment of *Fools All!* This was, however, overruled, by the decided opposition of my father; although he found it necessary to interpose the authority of Mr. Sheridan for that purpose. Finding himself thus foiled, in the grand attempt at producing *Vortigern* on *April Fool night*, that the after-piece might carry a sting in its tail, Mr. Kemble announced *My Grandmother* for the farce, intending that all the bearings of that production should be applied by the audience to the subject of the Shaksperian papers. This was not all: leagued with Malone, and the sworn opponents, in defiance of the duty he owed to the theatre, Mr. Kemble had recourse to every expedient prior to, as well as on the night of, representation, in order to crush the play; for which purpose he particularly selected the following line:—

“ And when this solemn mockery is o'er,”

that having been the preconcerted signal when the opponents of the papers were to manifest their disapprobation. Having, in the course of his part, arrived at the anxiously expected line, he delivered it in an exceedingly pointed manner; when, *of course*, a deafening clamour reigned throughout one of the most crowded houses ever recollected in theatrical history, which lasted for several minutes. Upon a hearing being at length obtained, instead of taking up the following line of the speech in rotation, Mr. Kemble reiterated the above line with an expression the most pointedly sarcastic and acrimonious it is possible to conceive. The result was, from that moment so deafening became the uproar produced by conflicting applause and disapproval, that not one syllable more of the play was rendered intelligible. The speech, of which the above line forms a part, will be found towards the close of the second scene of act the fifth, being the last scene but one of the drama; prior to which, no hostility had been manifested. Indeed, so decided was the applause, that many of the performers appeared confident of the success of the play; among whom, in particular, was the late inimitable Mrs. Jordan, personating the character of Flavia in my drama, with whom I remained in close conversation during a considerable portion of the performance, that lady uniformly persisting in offering her congratulations on the success that awaited the drama, of which “ *I had been the fortunate discoverer.*”—[How little did I then imagine, that the lapse of a few short years would behold me following that neglected, but unmatched Thalia of the British stage, to her last long home in the cemetery of St. Cloud; where her remains now moulder, with scarcely a memento to designate the spot that enshrouds them.]

Notwithstanding the pointed hostility manifested by Mr. Kemble, in every stage of this business, it would be the height of injustice not to mention the strenuous exertions, for the success of the piece, manifested by Messrs. Bensley, Barrymore, Caulfield, and King, with Mesdames Powel and Jordau. These, however, who have any re-

collection of such walking automatons as Benson and Phillimore being made to figure in my tragedy, can form a shrewd surmise of what the acting manager intended should prove the result of the performance. Added to this, the late Mr. Dignum was purposely placed by Mr. Kemble in a subordinate part, wherein, speaking of the sounding of trumpets, he had to exclaim, "*Let them bellow on!*" which words were uttered with such a nasal and tin-kettle twang, that no muscles, save those of adamant, could have resisted the powerful incentive to laughter.

Having brought the subject of the representation of Vortigern to a close, I shall now enter upon that portion of my preface which comes closest to my own feelings; and if, in the progress of my remarks, I may at times appear somewhat instigated by a sentiment of vindictiveness, let me entreat the reader to commune with himself, and to inquire what would be the state of his mind, after suffering thirty-six years incessant persecution and obloquy, for the commission of an act intended only to please a parent, and which, in reality, has injured no one but its author, and that being he so fondly strove to gratify.

Some time after the appearance of Malone's long expected "*Investigation*," Mr. Chalmers published, first his "*Apology for the Believers*," and then a "*Supplemental Apology*"; wherein, though advocating the untenable side of the question, he displayed a far greater depth of antiquarian research, and scholastic reasoning, than his opponent; in short, there is scarcely one position laid down by Malone, which is not most satisfactorily refuted by Chalmers. At the commencement of this warfare, as to whether the manuscripts were genuine or not, the state of my poor father's mind was pitiable in the extreme; he as firmly crediting the originality of the papers, as I was aware of their fabrication.

For myself I can conscientiously assert, that this warfare affected me no further, than as creating uneasiness in the mind of my suffering parent: but when insinuations began to be directed against *his* character, which were ultimately converted into the following *bonâ fide* assertions—"That the youthful period of my life precluding all possibility of the papers being mine, the whole must of necessity have been fabricated by my father, who had made me the vehicle of introducing them to the public"—I must candidly confess the equanimity of my temper no longer remained unruffled. Never was a creature more basely calumniated, or subjected to more unmerited contumely. It is not because I am speaking of a parent, that I make this declaration; had Mr. Ireland been a mere acquaintance, it would be no more than my duty thus to exonerate, and once more proclaim aloud to the world his entire innocence. Not only was he a total stranger to every proceeding of mine, as regarded the composition of the papers; but, from principle, totally incapable of having even connived, much less have been himself the fabricator. There existed, in my father's character, a marked tenacity respecting adherence to

truth; and it was the thorough knowledge of his rigid principles on that head that long deterred me from making an ample confession of the fact, so much did I apprehend from the effects of his indignation, if made acquainted with the real nature of the whole transaction.

I had nearly forgotten to remark, that among other suppositions hazarded on the subject of concocting the forgery, some persons have been led to imagine, and still conceive, that the late George Steevens was my secret abettor, and gave me his assistance. Now, so remote was this from being the fact, that I never saw the commentator in question but once, and that after my producing the papers: this was in the shop of the late Mr. Richardson, printseller, then residing at the corner of Villiers Street, Strand.

Invariably, when descanting with persons on the subject of the papers, they have applauded the cheat, expressed a wish of having been capable of deceiving the world in a similar manner; and they have then uniformly concluded by upbraiding me for having avowed the fact. Never, indeed, should the world have been gratified by extorting from my lips one syllable approximating to a confession, had I not been urged by the imperious motives of rescuing my father's character from unmerited obloquy; then I did come forward with the truth, having first abandoned the paternal roof, and relinquished a profession for which I was studying; and, with the wide world before me, and a host of the most implacable enemies at my back, ere my twentieth year, I entered upon the eventful pilgrimage of life, without a guide to direct my steps, or any means of existence, save those which might result from my own industry and perseverance.

Some time after this avowal, I forwarded two very humble apologetic letters to Mr. George Chalmers, who never deigned to reply; these were followed by various others, on the publication of my "Confessions" in 1805, addressed to the leading personages who had advocated the validity of the MSS.

All my efforts, however, proved of no avail; the same animosity was manifested towards me, by a phalanx styling themselves the rigid censors of literature, and the guardians of Shakspeare's fame; consisting of such persons, for instance, as *Malone*, *Kemble*, *Dr. Parr*, *Bouden*, *Waldron*, with a string of *etceteras*, too tedious for enumeration. Would it be credited, that such men have proceeded to the ridiculous length of ranking my offence on a par with the forgery of a bank-bill; and, I am thoroughly convinced, would have felt infinite delight in witnessing my exit as a delinquent at the Old Bailey. If an untruth in literary matters were so heinous an offence, whence comes it that the late Sir Horace Walpole, afterwards Lord Orford, escaped the lash of reproof, for palming off his "Castle of Otranto" as the translation from an old Italian MS.? and why were not a long list of others, guilty of similar literary misdemeanours, dragged forth to public execration? No! the whole, except in the instance of poor Chatterton, to whose memory the world has since done justice, was

reserved for my devoted head; every burthen was accumulated on my shoulders: this I have endured with stoicism, until I conceive my penance fully achieved; and when I witness the splendid example of Sir Walter Scott, whose repeated denials, even to Majesty itself, of the authorship of the so called Waverly Novels, have rather added to than detracted from his well-earned literary reputation, I trust that so youthful an infraction of the great principle of truth should not be too bitterly remembered, and that I may now stand acquitted before the grand ordeal of society.

Having nothing more to add on the general subject of the Shaksperian papers, I shall wind up this prefatory address by a few observations on the conduct of those, who, arrogating to themselves a dictatorship in regard to every thing connected with the literature of Shakspeare, have been my unceasing persecutors.

Among these may be mentioned, the deceased Dr. Parr, of Greek celebrity, whose death, instead of accumulating a fresh odor of sanctity around his fame, has tended to open men's eyes, who now begin to find out, that the Doctor was not exactly that mighty phenomenon for which he had enjoyed the reputation, while living. A catalogue of this learned Theban's books has been published, under the title of "*Bibliotheca Parriana*," wherein the MS. opinions of the Doctor, as inserted in a multiplicity of works, are given to the public.

At p. 522 appears the following note from this *scholastic, erudite, and Christian divine*:

"Ireland's (Samuel)" *great and impudent forgery, called, "Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments, under the Hand and Seal of William Shakspeare."* Folio, 1796.

"I am almost ashamed to insert this worthless and infamously trickish book. It is said to include the tragedy of King Lear, and a fragment of Hamlet. Ireland told a LIE, when he imputed to *me* the words which *Joseph Warton* used, the very morning I called on Ireland, and was inclined to admit the possibility of genuineness in his papers. In my subsequent conversation, I told him my change of opinion. But I thought it not worth while to dispute in print with a detected impostor.

"S. P."

Here we have a sample of clerical politeness, mixed up with heartfelt ranklings, because it was impossible for the divine to deny that he had been *a staunch believer in the MSS. and the dupe of a boy of seventeen.*

It is true that it was *Dr. Warton*, instead of himself, as stated in error in my "Confessions," who passed a most pompous eulogy on my Shakspeare's Profession of Faith: but it so happens that I was present when *Drs. Parr and Warton* together inspected the papers; and it was on that memorable occasion that the latter, after the documents had been *twice read* by both of them, made use of the following words, in which Dr. Parr not only concurred, but himself pronounced panegyrics equally forcible: "*Sir, we have many fine things in our church service, and our Litany abounds in beauties; but here,*

“*...sir, here is a man who has distanced us all.*” As to a subsequent interview, stated to have taken place with my father, it is a gross falsehood; and was merely incorporated in the above note to palliate, as much as possible, the Doctor’s want of accuracy, in having accorded the sanction of his name to my MSS. These, indeed, were pitiable subterfuges for a churchman to descend to, and altogether unbecoming a person of the Doctor’s erudition, and high standing in society.

So much for the dead:—now for a living opponent. On the present occasion I have the honor to introduce to the reader, James Boaden, Esq. than whom a more fitting sample could not be ushered upon the *tapis*, to bring up the burthen of my tale with *eclat*; and prove, in their fullest extent, the assertions so frequently repeated, of the implacable hatred, and unremitting vindictiveness, uniformly practised in regard to me.

This person was one of the earliest and most frequent visitors at the house of my father, in Norfolk Street, after my production of the MSS. had excited a considerable sensation in the world. He was, at that period, editor of the “Oracle” newspaper, and in such capacity welcomed by my father, with all that ingenuousness for which he rendered himself conspicuous. The papers were laid before Mr. Boaden, *who not only verbally, but by letter to my father, and in paragraphs out of number, inserted in his diurnal, expressed a thorough conviction of their genuine stamp, not only from external but internal evidence*: neither did the MSS. alone produce conviction; but, to use his own words, they excited “*a tremor of the purest delight*”; such persuasion of their excellence being retained for months, “*making all scepticism ridiculous.*” Yet this man of *correct judgment* ultimately discovers that the whole was an *error in judgment*, which he excuses in his letter to George Steevens, with this very terse remark: that “*credulity is no disgrace,*” and “*strong enthusiasm eager to believe.*” Now, I should like to ask any man, boasting the smallest pretensions to common sense, whether, if one of Mr. Boaden’s Poems, or one of the Psalms, as translated by Sternhold and Hopkins, was produced in the handwriting of the period of Elizabeth, or printed by Didot, in his most superlative style, on wire wove, &c.; I should like, I say, to inquire, whether the apparent antiquity on the one hand, or the modern blazonry displayed on the other, could add one iota to the merits of the composition? and whether, in case any man, standing forward as a literary character, was to attach the epithet of sublime to the doggerel of Boaden or Sternhold, he would not be regarded as a consummate blockhead for his pains.

In p. 5 of a pamphlet, entitled *A Comparative Review of the Opinions of Mr. Boaden, in the Years 1795 and 1796*, we find as follows, in reference to the subject of my papers:—

“Mr. Boaden is very liberal in acknowledging in his pamphlet, (what indeed he could not deny, because it would have remained recorded against him in his newspapers,) that he was, at first, strongly

affected in favor of the MSS.; neither does he deny that he admitted their *style, diction, and poetical spirit*; but he leaves us to discover by what new light, by what cogency of argument, that which was once distinguished for "*the utmost delicacy of passion and poetical spirit*," became afterwards "worthy of no other notice than that of being *metrically smooth*"; and, that which was "*rationally pious and grandly expressed*," became "*execrable jargon*," the "*puerile quaintness and idiomatic poverty of a methodist rhapsody*." However, to enter into a detail respecting the numerous tergiversations of this writer would extend my Preface beyond all reasonable bounds; I, therefore, refer the reader to my "Confessions," p. 176, &c. for a further elucidation of the consistency displayed by J. Boaden, Esq. during his literary interference at the period in question.

I shall now suffer some six and twenty years to roll on, and again introduce the above personage to my reader's notice, under the following circumstances. Between seven and eight years back, I was engaged in preparing a MS. for Mr. Triphook, then residing in Bond-street; at which period, it so occurred, that James Boaden, Esq. was occupied in forwarding through the press, his "Inquiry into the Authenticity of the various Pictures and Prints of Shakspeare," of which work Mr. Triphook was also the publisher. During my frequent attendances in Bond-street, it is not surprising that I should encounter Mr. Boaden with feelings, heaven knows! widely different from those whereby that gentleman was actuated. Conceiving, however, in the frankness of my heart, that upwards of a quarter of a century must have cancelled all recollections of the past, and allayed every latent animosity, I spoke to Mr. Boaden without indulging a rancorous thought, notwithstanding the provocations received at his hands, whensoever he had found an opportunity of abusing me. After several casual meetings of this description in Mr. Triphook's shop, fully aware of the work whereon Mr. Boaden was then occupied, I offered to furnish, through Mr. Triphook, an account of a variety of spurious oil paintings and miniatures of Shakspeare, that have been sent into the world; which MS. I remitted to Mr. Triphook, who handed the same to Mr. Boaden. The work of the latter gentleman, at length, appeared; but he had scrupulously avoided making use of my MS. thus gratuitously tendered; and for this plain reason: it would have debarred him from the superlative gratification of venting anew his malice against me; which he has done in different parts of the said work, but more particularly in the opening Preface, at the first and second pages of which appears as follows:—

"A PERIOD of my life, of something more than forty years, has been devoted to the study of Shakspeare's works; and, on some outrageous liberties which, in the year 1796, were taken with his name, I had the honour to address a letter to the late George Steevens, Esq., which brought before the public the first detector of an impudent and very unskilful forgery. Upon that occasion, the great Commentator expressed a very agreeable opinion of my little work, by saying with his accustomed point: "Sir, you have very fairly gibbeted the culprit, and Mr. Malone will take him down and dissect

him;”—A TASK (adds Mr. Boaden) PERFORMED BY HIM WITH AN ANATOMICAL MINUTENESS, WHICH LEFT NOT THE SMALLEST NERVE OF THAT BODY OF FRAUD UNEXPOSED TO THE PUBLIC EYE.”

Such was the charitable recompense, for a kindness tendered to a man, who, like myself, I conceived incapable of hoarding up malice and hatred for such a series of years; but, alas! beings of this description, I have had, like blood-hounds at my heels, goading me to the very brink of destruction. In regard to Mr. Boaden's work, on the subject of the genuine portraits of our Bard, I think I may with veracity state, that had the writer inserted my MS. respecting the forged resemblances of the poet, that portion of the work would have proved by far the most entertaining part of his production, which has been refuted, in many parts, by Mr. Wyville; who, without possessing any of the boasted Greek and Latin of Mr. Boaden, or indeed a proper knowledge of English grammar, has proved the former writer altogether incompetent to discuss the comparative merits of oil paintings or engravings. The engravings illustrative of Mr. Boaden's book, furnished by Mr. Triphook, constitute the only worth of that volume, which, from the publishing price, has fallen two-thirds in value, being now bought for the sake of the portraits it contains. Another of this book-maker's lucubrations, is the life of his divinity the late J. P. Kemble, two volumes 8vo.; who, if we were to take the writer's *ipse dixit*, was faultless as a man, and in the histrionic walk, something super-human. Now we happen to know somewhat concerning John Philip, as well as Mr. Boaden; and had it fallen to our lot to chronicle his sayings and doings, we should have paid a little more attention to that very necessary ingredient in biographical writing, called *veracity*; that is to say, we should have incorporated the sombre and shadowy tints, in colouring the picture, and should not have pourtrayed John Philip, like a Chinese limner—all *whiteness*. We have known of *such* things, as theatrical Bacchanalian orgies, held in taverns under the Piazzas, when the bottle has circulated, until

“The grey-eyed morn peep'd o'er the eastern sky”:

at which carousals, great John Philip has sallied forth, vaulted the standings near the *Finish*, (where the men and women porters were accustomed to pitch their loads,) and from such exalted station, mine hero, has harangued the matinal multitude of the garden, with pithy speeches, to their great edification. We have equally heard of *Tarquin strides* behind the scenes, which gave rise to the dreadful:—“WHEREAS, I, JOHN PHILIP,” &c.—all facts of such a tendency however, are expunged from the *faithful biography* of Mr. Boaden: who resolutely determined that the world should have enough of the family, has since cked out another pair of ponderous tomes, *purporting* to be the life of Mrs. Siddons; wherein we will venture to assert, there are topics introduced, having no more reference to that lady, than there exists an affinity between Mr. Boaden and the milk of human charity. One word more concerning this personage, and we close our labour. Previous to the publication of his volume, before adverted to, respect-

ing the portraits of Shakspeare, and during my casual intercourse with Mr. Boaden at Mr. Triphook's, we one day walked out together, and arrived opposite the end of Buckingham-street, in the Adelphi. The subject of our conversation had been Shakspeare and my fabrications, when, on a sudden, pausing, my pompous companion, having summoned up a look of the mightiest import, thus addressed me:—
*“ You must be aware, sir, of the enormous crime you committed against the divinity of Shakspeare. Why, the act, sir, was nothing short of sacrilege; it was precisely the same thing as taking the holy chalice from the altar, and * * * * * therein!!!! ”*

There is a point in comparison, which renders bathos mere foolery. Comment is unnecessary; but there was something so preposterously ridiculous in the idea of assimilating my attempt to imitate Shakspeare, and the violation of the sacred mysteries of the altar, that had I raised my eyes, and encountered those of Mr. Boaden, I could not have repressed the burst of laughter, which then struggled for vent.

To hear an aged, walking mass of mortality, utter such a sample of mingled pedantry and folly, has left such an indelible impression upon my mind, that I never pass the spot in question, without a sentiment of pity, on recalling the ravings of a self-created expounder of Shakspeare, dwindled into second childhood.

I shall now close this Preface, which has already exceeded its limits, with two simple comments: If my productions were such miserable trash, as Mr. Boaden and his coadjutors asserted, (and, heaven knows! I have never claimed any great merit for their production,) what becomes of the intellects of those who stamped them, in many respects, worthy the Bard of Avon? And supposing the latter assertion *could* be, in the very *smallest* degree, correct, to what can be ascribed the malignity with which I have been pursued, but to an ignoble and dastardly sentiment of envy, nurtured in the bosoms of those, who were the dupes of a stripling in years, and a total novice in the paths of literature?

I cannot wind up the present Address, without testifying the heartfelt gratitude I feel, in avowing, that the candour of the present generation, so far from hunting me down, on account of this error of my youth, is willing to allow every credit that may be attachable to me, on the score of talent, however mediocre; at the same time, I claim from the public fiat, an acquittal of the only charge that could have been urged against me,—namely, a preorganized plan of fraud, under a base and sordid hope of pecuniary profit, instead of that most enviable of all rewards, which I had fallaciously hoped to ensure—the permanent gratification of beholding a father happy.

As few alterations as possible, have been made from the Play as published in 1799, and those with a view to restore the original text.

W. H. IRELAND.

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1799, BY MR. SAMUEL IRELAND.

It is now near three years since the Play, which the following sheets present to the public, was represented at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The fate which it underwent, and the decision of the audience, are well known. Notwithstanding that decision, the Editor has, at length, agreeably to his promise made at the time of that representation, again laid it before the public; which, if it exposes it to the test of a more accurate criticism, will give it the opportunity of a more unbiassed and temperate examination.

They who are at all conversant with dramatic concerns, must know that the opinion of large assemblies, promiscuously composed of all orders and classes, must depend on a variety of circumstances, local, temporary, and accidental.

Where no stronger or worse motives interfere, fashion and caprice too often give the direction; but spleen and interest are made more powerful agents; and by their industry and activity, even the master-puppet, be he in sock or buskin, may be gained, and the public may be too easily and unwarily led by premature and precipitate conclusions.

No man who recollects what was said and written in the public prints concerning this piece, on the eve of its representation, and the ludicrous manner in which the principal character was sustained, can deny, that the Editor has a right to complain of the most illiberal and injurious treatment.

Every undue stratagem, and every mean and petty artifice, was resorted to within doors and without, to prejudice the public mind; and one more deeply interested than had then, or has yet appeared, though a professed trader on the subject of Shakspeare, on the day before the representation, under the title of "An Enquiry into the Authenticity of certain miscellaneous Papers, &c. &c." with this view, and the further expectation of helping off a few copies, sent into the world a volume long before promised, and long since forgotten.

This mass of dulness and self-conceit, consisting of about 430 pages, established nothing; and was built on principles (if it is not an abuse to apply to such trash, a term so respectable) that could not possibly establish any thing. In every one of the instances which, with such a weak and overweening confidence, he so very idly brought forward, he has been exposed; and in some of them has been himself the author and detector of his own childishness, incapacity and ignorance.

Neither the index-lore, or the alphabetical, lexicographical labours of this sagacious discoverer, or his congenial followers or associates, nor any declaration since made from a quarter once domestic to the Editor, through which something like genuine information might

naturally have been expected, can induce him to believe that great part of the mass of papers in his possession are the fabrication of any individual, or set of men of the present day.

A fruitless expectation, that time, the discoverer of truth, might ere this have withdrawn that veil of mystery which yet involves this transaction, has alone given occasion to delay this publication. The Editor had been happy to have been able to have penetrated it; and to have assigned to its proper owner each fragment and each whole.

As to the merits or demerits of the Play now before the public, the Editor does not in the smallest degree consider himself responsible any where, or in any way. He sold the piece with "all its imperfections on its head," after various cool and deliberate readings, and stated candidly all he had been told relative to it; all that, which, from various circumstances, he had at that time no reason to doubt or discredit.

After the Play was contracted for, some alterations were deemed necessary to fit it for representation. It was much too long, and consequently many passages were expunged; and, in one historical fact, (thought too gross for the public ear, *viz.* the incestuous passion of the king towards his daughter,) it underwent some further alterations; but, excepting these particulars, it stands nearly as in the original.

In this state it was delivered to the theatre, with a request, or rather *entreaty*, that all further alteration, deemed necessary, should be made by the acting manager, or any other person competent to the business: to this request he received the following official answer from Mr. Kemble:—"That the play would be acted faithfully from the copy sent to the theatre"; and it was accordingly acted, literally, from the manuscript delivered to the house. This conduct was, as the Editor believes, unprecedented in the management of a theatre; and must warrant him in concluding, that, in the judgment of the acting manager, the play wanted no aid or alteration.

Be these matters as they may, this Piece is laid before the public, with such interpolations by the Editor, as he presumes it was the duty of the acting manager to have made previous to its representation.

The lines printed within the inverted commas were not in the play-house copy, and consequently were not spoken.

The Editor feels, and here begs leave to acknowledge, his obligations to his friend, William Linley, Esq., for his skill in composing the three songs in this Piece, in which he is universally allowed to have shown much taste and judgment; he likewise professes himself much indebted to Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Powell, for their very spirited exertions and excellent acting on this occasion; and could he, with truth or justice, make the smallest acknowledgment to Mr. Kemble, and his fellow tragedian, Mr. Phillimore, he has little doubt but that, whoever may have been the author of the piece, it might still have been received, and might have promoted the interests of the theatre.

Norfolk Street, Strand, 1799.

P R O L O G U E
I N T E N D E D F O R V O R T I G E R N .

WRITTEN BY JAMES HENRY PYE, ESQ. P. L.

THE cause, with learn'd investigation fraught,
Behold, at length, to this tribunal brought:
No fraud your penetrating eyes can cheat,
None here can Shakspeare's writing counterfeit.
As well the taper's base, unlustrous ray,
Might strive to emulate the orb of day,
As modern bards, whom venal hopes inspire,
Can catch one spark of his celestial fire.
If in our scenes your eyes delighted find
Marks that denote the mighty master's mind;
If at his words, the tears of pity flow,
Your breasts with horror thrill, with rapture glow;
If on your harrow'd souls impress'd you feel
The stamp of nature's uncontested seal;—
Demand no other proof, nor idly pore
O'er mouldy manuscripts of ancient lore,
To see if every tawny line display
The genuine ink of fam'd Eliza's day:
Nor strive with curious industry to know
How poets spelt two centuries ago.
But if these proofs should fail; if in the strain
You seek the drama's awful sire in vain,
Yet in our ancient legend should you trace
Truth's genuine features, tho' of humbler grace,
Condemn not rashly. O'er the forest glade,
Tho' the oak spread no patriarchal shade,
Yet may a shrub of no unlovely green
With vivid foliage deck the sylvan scene;
Some tuneful notes the vocal woodlands fill,
And sooth the ear, tho' Philomel be still.
Then each extraneous matter laid aside,
By its own merit be our drama tried.
Forget the prejudice of rigid art,
To read the code of nature in the heart;
Consult her laws, from partial favour free,
And give as they decide, your just decree.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY SIR JAMES BLAND BURGESS, BART.

SPOKEN BY MR. WHITFIELD.

No common cause your verdict now demands,
Before the court immortal Shakspeare stands;
That mighty master of the human soul,
Who rules the passions, and with strong control
Thro' every turning of the changeful heart
Directs his course sublime, and leads his powerful art.
When on his birth propitious nature smil'd,
And hung transported o'er her favourite child;
While on his head her choicest gifts she shower'd,
And o'er his mind her inspiration pour'd:—
“ Proceed,” she cried, “ the high decree fulfil!
“ 'Tis thine to rule, with magic sway, the will;
“ On fancy's wing to stretch o'er boundless space,
“ And all creation's varied works to trace;
“ 'Tis thine each flitting phantom to pursue,
“ Each hidden power of verse to bring to view,
“ To shed o'er British taste celestial day,
“ And reign o'er Genius with unrival'd sway.”

Such was the high behest—the sacred choice
Long has been sanction'd by our candid voice:
The favour'd relics of your Shakspeare's hand,
Unrival'd, and inimitable, stand.

If hope of fame some modern bards has led
To try the path where Shakspeare wont to tread;
If, with presumptuous wing, they dar'd aspire
To catch some portion of his sacred fire,—
Your critic pow'rs the vain attempt repell'd,
The flimsy vapour, by your breath dispell'd,
Expos'd the trembling culprit to your sight,
While Shakspeare's radiance shone with doubled light.

From deep oblivion snatch'd, this play appears:
It claims respect, since Shakspeare's name it bears;
That name, the source of wonder and delight,
To a fair hearing has at least a right.
We ask no more—with you the judgment lies;
No forgeries escape your piercing eyes!
Unbiass'd, then, pronounce your dread decree,
Alike from prejudice and favour free.
If, the fierce ordeal pass'd, you chance to find
Rich sterling ore, tho' rude and unrefin'd,
Stamp it your own; assert your poet's fame,
And add, fresh wreaths to Shakspeare's honour'd name.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, 1796.

CONSTANTIUS	<i>Mr. Bensley.</i>
AURELIUS	<i>Mr. Barrymore.</i>
UTER	<i>Mr. Caulfield.</i>
VORTIGERN	<i>Mr. Kemble.</i>
WORTIMERUS	<i>Mr. Whitfield.</i>
CATAGRINUS	<i>Mr. Trueman.</i>
PASCENTIUS	<i>Mr. C. Kemble.</i>
HENGIST	<i>Mr. Benson.</i>
HORSUS	<i>Mr. Phillimore.</i>
FOOL	<i>Mr. King.</i>
SERVANT	<i>Master De Camp.</i>
PAGE	<i>Master Gregson.</i>
EDMUNDA	<i>Mrs. Powell.</i>
FLAVIA	<i>Mrs. Jordan.</i>
ROWENA	<i>Miss Miller.</i>
ATTENDANTS ON EDMUNDA	{ <i>Miss Leake.</i>
	{ <i>Miss Tidswell.</i>
	{ <i>Miss Heard.</i>

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c. &c.

VORTIGERN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A LARGE HALL.

Discovers CONSTANTIUS, VORTIGERN, WORTIMERUS,
CATAGRINUS, PASCENTIUS, *and Attendants.*

Con. Good Vortigern! as peace doth bless our isle,
And the loud din of war no more affrights us,
And as my soul hath plac'd thee next herself,
'Tis our desire that thou deny'st us not
That, which anon we 'crave thee to accept;
For though most weighty be the proffer'd task,
We trust thy goodness will the toil accept,
Since we have always found thee kind by nature;
And, as the pelican, e'en with thy blood,
Ready to succour and relieve.

Vor. Most gracious sov'reign! to command is thine;
And, as a subject, mine is to obey.

Con. Such was the answer we did here expect,
And farther now we shall explain our meaning:—
As frozen age we find doth fast approach,
And state affairs lie heavy with ourself,
To thee one half our pow'r we here resign,
That due reward may pace with thy great labour.
To this our proposition, what reply?

Vor. Oh! my most noble, good, and bounteous lord,
These honours are indeed so great, so weighty,
I fear, least, like a garment too confin'd,
They awkwardly should press upon the wearer;

Therefore, my gracious lord, let one more worthy,
I do beseech thee, bear them.

Con. Nay, nay! this thy excuse will not suffice
E'en now we do await thy full consent;
And, that more speedily we may conclude,
We do require of thee, thou here shouldst sign
This deed prepar'd, by which thou wilt become—ourselves
conjoin'd—

Sov'reign of this our realm.

Vor. I shall, my lord, obey your high command.

[*Signs the paper.*]

Con. Anon, we shall await thee at our palace.

[*Exit Constantius.*]

Vor. Fortune, I thank thee!

Now is the cup of my ambition full!
And, by the rising tempest in my blood,
I feel the fast approach of greatness, which,
E'en like a peasant, stoops for my acceptance.
Yet hold: O! conscience, how is't with thee?
Why dost thou whisper? should I heed thee now,
My fabric crumbles, and must fall to nought?
Come, then, thou soft, thou double-fac'd deceit!
Come, fawning flattery! silence-sealing murder!
Attend me quick, and prompt me to the deed!
What! jointly wear the crown? No! I will all!
And that my purpose soon may find its end,
This, my good king, must I, unmannerly,
Push from his seat, and fill myself the chair.—
Welcome thou glittering mark of royalty!
And with thy pleasing, yet oppressive weight,
Encircle fast this my determin'd brow.
Yet soft: ere I proceed, let caution guide me;
For though the trunk and body of the tree
Be thus within my gripe, still do I fear
Those boughs which stand so near and close allied,
That will, ere long, yield seeds for dire revenge.
Then since my soul e'en murder must commit,
To gratify my thirst for royalty,

Why should I play the child ; or, like a niggard,
 By sparing, mar and damn my cause for ever ?
 No ! as the blow strikes one, all three must fall !
 Then shall I, giant-like, and void of dread,
 Uprear my royal and encircled brow,
 And, in the face of the Omnipotent,
 Bid bold defiance.—
 This my determination, then, shall be,
 So firm as adamant the end I'll see.

SCENE II.—A CHAMBER IN VORTIGERN'S PALACE.

Enter EDMUNDA and FLAVIA.

Fla. My dearest mother ! why let watery grief,
 “ Like a corroding and slow malady,
 “ Nip thus the fairest and most beauteous form
 “ That bounteous nature, in her happiest mood,
 “ E'er fram'd in mould celestial to grace
 “ This nether world ?”—Oh ! my beloved mother !
 Turn, turn those tear-worn eyes, and let one smile,
 One cheering look of sweet serenity,
 Beam forth to comfort my afflicted soul !

Edm. Oh ! heavens ! my gentle Flavia, would I could !
 But this corroding, pensive melancholy,
 Most venom-like, destroys its nourisher.
 Oh ! Vortigern, my lov'd, once loving husband,
 Why rend this bursting heart with cold disdain ?
 E'en the poor culprit, dragg'd before his judge,
 May boldly plead his cause ; but I, alas !
 Most innocent and ignorant of fault,
 Must bear the weight of judgment.

Enter PASCENTIUS.

Fla. What news of fav'ring import, dearest brother,
 Does this thine eager joy forebode ?

Pas. Oh ! I have tidings I would fain make known ;
 Yet are they of such wondrous magnitude,
 Scarce can I give them utterance.

Edm. Oh! speak, my child! my dear Pascentius, speak;
For much thy mother consolation needs.

Pas. The King, then, madam, in his royal bounty,
Hath, jointly with himself, conferr'd the sway
Of this our mighty kingdom, on my father.

Edm. Now wo, indeed, hath made its master-piece!
Thou fell ambition! thou art mine enemy:
Thy idle dreams have forc'd my husband from me;
Thy honey'd visions have depriv'd my soul
Of that alone which made life worth retaining.
Yes, thou art now, alas! become a flower,
That, by the radiance of the sun, is parch'd,
And, lacking drops of succour, droops and dies.

Enter FOOL, whimsically attired, with his bells and ladle.

Pas. Whither so fast, good Fool?

Fool. Good Fool, say'st thou! Marry, these are sweet
words, that do not often fall to our lot; but let me tell
you, good master, fools have excellent wits, and those
that ha' none will gladly go flatter, lest the fool's folly
should make them still more foolish.

Pas. But, prithee, tell us what is thine affair?

Fool. Oh! my affair is weighty indeed, being burthened
with the speech o' royalty.

Pas. And wherefore so!

Fool. I prithee, stay thy patience but awhile, and I will
tell thee: thou dost expect nought from the Fool but
folly; but from a king thou wouldst a cunning speech.

Pas. And is't not so?

Fool. Oh no! by my troth, our good sovereign hath
unto my noble master betrayed great lack of policy.

Pas. How so?

Fool. Why, your wise man will tell you, the crown
doth gall the wearer; but, marry, I will show myself the
fool indeed; for I do say the half oft pinches more than
the whole.

Pas. Thou wouldst be witty, Fool!

Fool. Marry, say not I would be, but that I am; for,

let me tell you, the wit of your Fool is true wit: being solely his own, no man coveting it; whereas, that of your wise man comes from books, and from those who went before. But wherefore should I thus lose wind? My wit, being folly, is not by your wise man understood; therefore, I'll to the purpose. My master is made half king, and sends me, his Mercury, to tell your gentle ladyship his honour's pleasure.

Edm. Prithee, be brief, and speak thine errand quickly.

Fool. An't please you, sweetest mistress, this he wills: that, in your best attire, you straight attend to honor him and th' other half of the crown.

Edm. We shall be ready at command. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—ANOTHER APARTMENT IN VORTIGERN'S PALACE.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Thus far, then, have my deeds a sanction found;
 For still each morn doth the resplendent sun
 Dart forth its golden rays, to grace my sight.
 O what an inconsistent thing is man!
 There was a time when e'en a murd'rous thought
 Would have congeal'd my very mass of blood;
 "And, as a tree, on the approaching storm,
 "My frame would shake and tremble."
 But now I stand not at the act itself,
 Which breaks all bonds of hospitality.—
 To me, the King hath ever been most kind;
 Yea, even lavish of his princely favours,—
 And this his love do I requite with murder!
 And wherefore this? Why! for a diadem,
 The which I purchase at no less a cost
 Than the perdition of my precious soul;
 Still at that self-same price must I obtain it.
 The rooted hate the Britons bear the Scots
 Is unto me an omen most propitious.
 I have despatched my secret emissaries,

And the young princes, sons of the old king,
 Long since for study, sojourners at Rome,
 Even for them have I prepared honours:
 For ere the moon shall twice have fill'd her orb,
 Death shall entwine them with a crown immortal!

Enter Servants.

Ser. Two officers, my lord, await your leisure.

Vor. Shew them to our presence.

Enter Murderers.

Have ye concluded?

Is your answer ready?

Murd. We have consider'd all;
 And on your promis'd bounty undertake
 The speedy execution.

Vor. Ye are agreed?

Both. Yes, my good lord.

Vor. List, then, awhile!

This night Constantius gives a feast, whereat
 He wills I shall be present. Mark we well;
 And let your signal my retiring be:
 Then tarry not, but to it on the instant.

Murd. Fear not, my noble lord, we are resolv'd

[*Exeunt.*]

Vor. So now, good King, prepare thee for the worst.
 And, ere the thick and noisome air of night
 Shall with damn'd Hecate's baneful spells be fill'd,
 Thou must from hence to the cold bed of death,
 To whom the peasant and the king are slaves.
 Come, then, black night, and hood the world in darkness;
 Seal close the hearts of those I have suborn'd,
 That pity may not turn them from their purpose. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—A CHAMBER IN CONSTANTIUS' PALACE.

Enter CONSTANTIUS with a Groom.

Con. Place here the light. Now hasten to the hall,
 And unto Vortigern present this ring,

Pledge of my sacred friendship, and alliance.
 Tell him, I fain would see him in the morning.
 So, fair thee well; we now would be alone. [*Exit Page.*
 O sleep, sweet nourisher of man and babe:
 Soother of every sorrow, that canst bury
 The care distracted mind in sweet oblivion,—
 To thee, O gentle pow'r! I plight my soul!
 Here, then, on my bended knee, great God,
 Let me implore thy grace, and look for mercy!
 " Though thou hast plac'd me sovereign over men,
 " And on my temples bound the diadem;
 " Yet am I subject still to human frailty,
 " And nought can boast more than my meanest vassal."
 How wisely fram'd is Nature's glorious work:
 The smallest reptile doth its instinct boast;
 Ay, is as nicely form'd as man himself.
 Both doom'd to die, to rot, and come to dust.
 Yet man hath one great property besides,—
 A never fading, an immortal soul!
 Upon that thought rest I my happiness.

[*Lies on the couch.*

Enter two Murderers.

1st Mur. " Oh! if one spot did sully his pure soul,
 " In heaven hath he wip'd it clean away,
 " With this his sweet, unfeigned oraison.
2nd Mur. " 'Tis true.
 " The King to us hath ever been most kind:
 " 'Twould have disgrac'd the name of murderer
 " Had we to death despatch'd him unprepar'd
1st Mur. " Why, how now?
 " Hast thou forgot thine errand?
 " Wast sent here to prate thus,
 " Or to fulfil thy promise?
 " I'll do't; nor this my dagger will I sheath
 " Till reeking with his blood.
2nd Mur. " Yet, one moment, I pray thee, comrade
1st Mur. " I tell thee, I will not:

“ For, as I am a man and soldier,
 “ So will I scorn to break my promis’d vow.

2nd Mur. “ Thou shall not yet;

“ For, statue like, here will I fix myself,

“ Till thou dost hear me out.

“ Oh! is’t not most manlike, that we stain

“ Our hands with blood that ne’er did us offend?

“ Is’t not most serpent-like, to sting sweet sleep,

“ Which even from the giant takes all strength,

“ And makes man taste of that which is to come?

“ Let us, I pray thee, friend, turn from the deed!

“ I cannot, dare not, nay! I will not do’t.

1st Mur. “ Coward! take hence that poor, unmanly frame,

“ Or this my steel shall work a double end.

2nd Mur. “ Lay on, then! for I will defend the King,

“ And may the gods aid this my good design.”

[*They fight; 2nd Murderer dies behind the Scenes.*]

The King awakes.

Con. “ Vassal, I say! what means this bloody deed?

“ This bold intrusion on our royal presence?

“ Can majesty command no more respect;

“ But, that our very sleep must be disturb’d

“ With murder, rude and most licentious?

Mur. “ Why, plainly then, I do not fear thy presence;

“ And to be brief with thee, thine hour is come!

King. “ Traitor and villain, what wouldst thou?

Mur. “ Nay then, an thou dost speak so rudely,

“ Take thy reward.

[*Stabs him.*]

King. “ Oh! I die, sweet heaven receive my soul!

“ Forgive, oh! pardon this his crime!

“ I come! Bliss! bliss! is my reward for ever. [Dies.]

Mur. “ Farewell, good King! and thou my comrade too!”

Hence on time’s wing will I to Vortigern,
 And this my two-edg’d work to him unfold.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

Enter VORTIGERN, with Guards, as having viewed the dead body of the King behind the scenes.

Vor. O! this preposterous and inhuman act,
Doth stir up pity in the blackest hell.
Heav'n's aspect did foretell some ill this night;
For each dread shrieking minister of darkness
Did chatter forth his rude and dismal song,
While bellowing thunder shook the troubled earth,
"And the livid and flaky lightning,
"Widely burst ope each crack in heav'n's high portal."
Have ye the traitor seiz'd? Is he yet dead?

Off. Hard by, my lord, he lies reeking in's blood!
Despair and horror master'd each man's breast;
The attempt to check their rage would have been useless,
His body is become one gaping wound.

Vor. O! my good friends, would ye had spar'd his life,
And that your zeal had been more temperate!
For, by the workings of my soul, I find
This was the instrument, but not the head.

Off. Name him you deem the murderer, good my lord!

Vor. Be silent, and mark well, that I shall say:
The Scots, you know, bear us fell enmity:
Many of rank do tarry in our court;
On them the guilt of this foul murder rests.
I pray you, instantly despatch the guard,
And seize each Scotsman ye shall chance to meet.
I will go summon all the lords to council,
And well consider that 'twere best to do. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—ASSEMBLY OF BARONS.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Oh! my thrice noble and right worthy peers,
We now are met upon the heaviest summons
That ever yet did occupy our thoughts:
The sparkling drop which graces every eye,

And fain would deluge every manly cheek,
 Denotes the brimful sorrow of the heart:
 Pity disgraces not the manlike brow;
 And yet it suits but ill the present crisis,
 When our best strength and wisdom both are needful,
 To stem this black, this damn'd conspiracy!
 For bloody war and foul rebellion lurk
 Beneath the mask of cruel treachery,
 Which, i' th' present, is so plainly shewn,
 By the brutal deed of these vile Scotsmen!
 Then let not drowsy thought deter our purpose,
 Nor basely rot in us the plant of justice.
 The clamorous people call aloud for sentence!
 Should we delay, it will go hard with us.

1st Bar. Trusting to thee, our noble sage protector,
 We here, without delay, pronounce as guilty,
 The perpetrators of this crying deed.
 We further, with one general accord,
 Beseech you bear the badge of royalty,
 Until the princes shall return from Rome:
 For on Aurelius, now the elder son
 Of our deceased King, the election lights.
 Well do we feel how tedious is the task,
 How full of trouble and perplexity!
 But we do also know thee for a man,
 Most good, most perfect, and most merciful!

Vor. I fear, good Barons, you do flatter me.
 I thought, ere this, to have resigned the weight,
 Which the late King had heaped upon my shoulders:
 But mark the sad reverse; for even now,
 You double this my load, and bear me down.
 Oh! ye have struck me where I am indeed
 Most vulnerable—" *The voice o' th' people!*"
 For them I will surrender liberty.
 Despatch to Rome the messengers, I pray;
 And let Aurelius know, that he is call'd
 To wear this gold, this forked diadem,
 That gives to man the sway of sovereignty.

2nd Bar. My lord, the people, Barons, all do thank you,
For this your kind compliance with their will.
To-morrow's dawn shall see the packets ready;
And we will, then, consult what messengers
Shall to the princes bear these heavy tidings.

Vor. 'Tis well! I do commend your zealous care.
And now, good friends, one mournful charge remains,
To 'tend the burial of our murder'd King.
Oh! 'twas a nipping blast, which suddenly
Bereft us of our first, our sweetest plant;
Both king and father it hath stolen from us.
"But, wherefore do I strive to ope anew,
"Those gates which bar the course of liquid sorrow?
"No! rather let your griefs now pine unseen,
"Where cold restraint can neither chide nor curb ye."
Farewell! time then be yours until to-morrow. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—A HALL IN VORTIGERN'S PALACE.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. How stands it now?—then am I but protector?
Oh! 'tis an attribute my soul abhors,
To sovereignty a pander and a slave,
That looks with wistful eyes upon the crown,
And dares not touch it:—No! I will none on't.
Curse on those lords that did award me this,
Whose justice needs must force them keep the crown
For those, who, by descent, do justly claim it.
By heav'ns! I'll pour my bitter vengeance down,
For this, their slow and niggardly promotion.
Yet, as they did award, and give me sway,
Until young prince Aurelius should arrive;
Then is it mine most sure! The princes cannot,
From their cold graves, return to snatch it from me!
Their wish'd-for deaths are sure! yet, do I dread—
For here within, there lurks a messenger
That cautions me, and fain would have me fear.
What, hoa! without, I say! who attends there?

Enter Servant.

Vor. Are there no letters yet arrived from Rome?

Serv. No, my good liege.

Vor. Nor messengers?

Serv. Neither, my gracious sir.

Vor. Retire a while.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Nor messengers, nor letters! this alarms me!

But what care I: e'en let the princes come;

When come, there's room enough i'th' ground for them.

But, soft! now let me weigh my present state;

For much I fear these Barons' proffer'd friendship.

“ Their niggard show of liberality

“ Suits ill my lofty aim, and but the semblance wears

“ Of that my soul is thirsting for—dominion!

“ Not rivetted by closer ties, their chief, tho' friendly,

“ May swerve, and prove a foe!”—

Yet, I've a lure that shall ensnare that chief:

My daughter's hand! but, if she should refuse,

Then were my purpose baffled, or destroy'd.

Is it not strange, a flinty heart like mine,

Should stagger thus, when thinking of a daughter?

Flavia! whose fondest love to young Aurelius,

Now sojourning at Rome, hath long been pledg'd!

Yet, what of that? shall she, a whining girl,

Oppose a father's and a monarch's will?

My firm resolve once known, will shake that mind,

Which in her gentlest moments nature fram'd.

This work achiev'd, each lord his aid shall lend;

And to my will the haughtiest crest shall bend. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VIII.—LONDON. THE PALACE.

Enter FLAVIA and PASCENTIUS.

Fla. Oh, heav'ns! in thy great mercy thou hast led me
To that dear object I so long have sought,
Through ev'ry secret winding o' th' palace.

Pas. My Flavia say!

What is't hath ruffled thus thy gentle bosom?
I fear our father hath occasion'd this;
For late, as passing through the hall I saw him,
He paced to and fro in great disorder:
Sometimes, in deep thought lost, he'd stop and pause,
Then o'er his troubled breast crossing his arms,
Would utter words, but in a voice so low,
That they distill'd themselves in gentle air.
Tho' I did thrice address him, yet he brake
Abruptly from me, and no answer made.
I never saw the conflict of his soul
So plainly in this countenance pourtray'd.

Fla. Alas! 'tis true! I too have seen my father;
And harshly has he urg'd my breach of vow
To my Aurelius, and to pledge my love
To one my soul abhors! say, then, my brother,
Is that kind friendship for my lov'd Aurelius,
Which first in years of infancy took root,—
Is't yet untainted? Speak truly, brother.
And are thy vows of friendship to thy sister
Pure and unspotted as the face of heav'n?
And wilt thou save her?

Pas. 'Tis not in my nature
To act a treach'rous or ungenerous part!

Fla. Enough, enough! I meant not to offend.
That I'm about to ask is truly urgent,
Nor more nor less than our own banishment.

Pas. Th' impending exile is to me most strange;
But, if thy dearest mother thou canst leave,
Then must it be most pressing: I consent,
And will not ruffle thee by further question.
But silence for a while: here comes the Fool,
Of him some tidings we, perchance, may glean.

Enter FOOL.

Fla. Speak, Fool, when did'st last see my gentle mother?

Fool. Rather ask, when 'twas that I e'er saw thy father in such sort before : marry, he did never speak so roundly to me. Of old, your Fool did make your sage one tremble ; but my foolship hath not found it so. Times must indeed be bad, when fools lack wit to battle wise mens' ire. Nay, but I have legs, therefore, can run ; a heart, that's merry, but would be more so, an 'twas drench'd with sack from my ladle : but no matter, that's empty, till you gentles choose to fill it : then, by your leaves, we'll walk, and carry our wits where they'll chance meet better fare.

Pas. Nay, nay ; come hither, Fool ; be not too hasty. This fellow's true and honest ; and, dear sister, Might well our purpose serve : wilt thou consent That in our service he be bound ?

Fla. Of me ask nothing, but pursue that council Which, in thy riper wisdom, shall seem meet.

Pas. What's thy purpose, Fool ?

Fool. To quit thy father.

Pas. What think'st o'me for a master ?

Fool. Nay, o'that I think not, for thou wouldst joke ; but an thou dost, thou hast rare impudence to do't i'th' presence of a fool.

When thy beard is somewhat blacker,
When thy years have made thee riper,
When in purse the pounds thou'rt telling,
And for a brothel thou'lt be selling
Thy patrimony, and thy lands,

Why marry, an I should, then, find nought more suiting,
my charity shall bid me follow thee, and teach thee the
ways o' this slippery world.

Fla. O tarry not, for we must hence away.
What hour is it ?

Pas. Near five o'th' clock.
This brilliant mass o'fire, the golden sun,
Hath just saluted with a blushing kiss,
Yon partner of his bed, the vasty sea.

Fool. Yea, and your father wills that ye do soon salute

your beds; for he hath ordered that supper be instantly brought into the hall.

Fla. Good heav'ns! so soon! Oh! my Pascentius,
Each moment lost is an eternity. [*Exeunt.*

Fool. Nay, then, ye are gone and ha' left your poor Fool behind. Methinks, I love that young master; nay, I know not how 'tis, but my legs would needs go follow him: yet, master Fool, is this wisdom? for they say the legs should ne'er carry away the brains. Yet, let me see: cannot I, in my folly, new form this saying, and turn it to mine own conceit? I ha' hit it: for it matters not what comes o' my brains; for men say they are good for nought, but my legs are; therefore, let the better o'th' two serve as guide for the other. I'll away, then, and follow him. [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE. I.—ROME.

Enter AURELIUS and UTER, CONSTANTIUS' two Brothers.

Uter. E'en now in Rome have we for seven long years
Made this our wearisome and constant sojourn:
I would we were again in Britain.

Aur. Even so, good Uter, stands it with myself;
Nay, an thou yearn'st to see thy native land,
How is it, then, with me, that there have left
The jewel of my soul, my dearest Flavia!

Uter. Nay, good my brother, patience yet a little:
All will be well, Flavia doth love you still.

Aur. I cannot, will not bear this absence longer.

Enter Servant.

Serv. A messenger, my lord, attends without,
On business of great import.

Aur. Whence comes he?

Serv. From Britain.

Aur. From Britain, say'st thou? then admit him straight.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Enter Messenger.

Mes. My gracious lord, are you the eldest son
Of our good King Constantius?

Aur. Even so.

Mes. This packet, then, I fear, will news contain
The most afflicting.

AURELIUS reads.

These letters we in haste despatch, to tell you
Of your dear father's death, and to forewarn you
Of your own danger:—murder most foul hath ta'en him.

Vortigern on the Scots hath laid the murder ;
 Yet, under this pretence, much lies conceal'd.
 Till you arrive, he is to rule deputed :
 But as you prize your lives return not yet.

Aur. Oh ! horror ! horror ! my dear father murder'd !

Uter. By whom ? speak, Messenger, where, when, and
 how ?

Mes. The plot, good princes, hath been deeply laid.

Aur. This is, indeed, most foul ! say on, my friend ;
 Speak quickly, I entreat thee !

Mes. Then, thus it is—Vortigern hath done the deed ;
 His love of splendour, pomp, and sovereignty,
 And his great int'rest in the people's minds,
 All, all did prompt him to this hellish act.

Aur. Uter,—oh, heavens ! the father of my Flavia !
 It is impossible ! It cannot be !

Uter. Oh ! this, indeed, is damned treachery.
 My dear Aurelius, let not stupor choak
 The worthy feeling of a just revenge.
 Courage, Aurelius ! courage, my dear brother !

Aur. Speak on, speak on, and end thy sad discourse !

Mes. Thy friends in Britain long suspected this,
 And to each port despatch'd their trusty spies,
 To learn what vessels there for Rome were bound.
 Haply that which hither hath convey'd me,
 Was to have brought your executioners.

Aur. Oh ! would it had been so. Uter support me !

Uter. Let us retire awhile, my gentle brother ;
 Hereafter, we will send and question *thee*,
 Touching thy tidings, and their direful cause. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—ROME.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, and Messenger.

Aur. Our friends in England, then, have thought it fitting,
 That, on receipt of these, thy woful letters,
 We should, with speed, to Scotland hie us ?

Mes. E'en so did they instruct for weighty reasons.
 " Know, Vortigern did alway hate the Scots;
 " And oftentimes hath, during thy father's reign,
 " Fram'd laws, most burthensome unto that people.
 " But the keen tooth of hatred and revenge,
 " With double fury since hath shewn itself;
 " For every noble Scot then found in London,
 " Did suffer 'neath the tiger's 'vengeful fangs,
 " And this, to direst rage, hath stirr'd their blood."
 Your story told, will raise you aid of thousands.
 Three years of plenty have, among the Britons,
 Sown seeds of luxury and baneful riot;
 Therefore, they're unprepar'd, nor think of war.

Uter. Are vessels ready to convey us thither?

Mes. Yes, my good lord.

Aur. Come, brother, let's away then, with all speed.—
 But wer't not better that we change these habits?

Mes. No, no! your Roman vestments will disguise you;
 And may, in Scotland, greatly aid your cause.

Aur. Then be it so. Farewell to thee, O, Rome!
 I ne'er did think that, when thus quitting thee,
 My brimful heart would have ran o'er with sorrow. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A HALL.

Discovers VORTIGERN, EDMUNDA, WORTIMER, &c. *at supper.*

Vor. Seek, Wortimer, thy brother and thy sister:
 Tell them it suits but ill their present years,
 To tarry thus, when summon'd to our presence.

Wort. My gracious father, I obey.

Edm. O! dearest husband, calm thy ruffled soul,
 They mean not to offend your grace; perchance,
 They know not of thy wish for their attendance.

Vor. Peace, then; and with thy words, whet not, I pray,
 That wrath, which kindles sore within my breast!
 Again, dost hear me, bid thy tongue be silent,
 'Twere better else, thou didst retire.

Edm. I go, and though a vulture gnaw my heart,
I'd bear it all with meekness and with patience,
Rather than this my voice should e'er offend thee. [*Exit.*

Wort. My gracious sir, I've search'd the chambers
through,
And call'd aloud, but answer had I none ;
Save mine own words, return'd upon mine ear,
In airy sound.

Vor. What! scorn'd, and thus defied! I will not bear it.
Send for my prating wife, and should I find
That she, in anywise, did aid their flight,
Let her beware of my revenge.—What, ho!

Enter Servant.

Quick to my wife, and say I'd speak with her.
As yet, from those dull sluggards sent to Rome,
No tidings have I heard. But here she comes.

Enter EDMUNDA.

Edm. What is your pleasure, sir?

Vor. Where are my recreant son and daughter gone :
Nay, think not with those eye-drops to deceive me ;
Tell me, I say,—thou know'st full well their flight!

Edm. If in these veins doth run the blood of life,
Or there be truth on earth, I know not of them.

Vor. Deceive me not; I say thou speak'st most false.
I know the quality of women's eyes,
That, in a breath, can weep, can laugh, or frown.
Say not these waters flow for loss o' them ;
I know thee well, thou hast with both conspir'd ;
'Twere better thou mak'st known their hiding place.

Edm. O! sir, these tears do stop my pow'r o' speech,
Which would again vouch that I utter'd.

Vor. It is most false: but look to't, and dost hear me,—
Come not athwart me and my purposes,
Lest thou shouldst add to that fierce hate I bear thee.

[*Exit.*

Edm. And can this be? these ears were sure deceiv'd.

Yet I sleep not, nor is my brain distemper'd.
 It was not so, he said not he did hate me!
 O! heav'ns, in your great mercy, aid me now;
 And if your pleasure be not to torment
 Our poor existence in this span of life,
 Aid me to bear my weight o' miseries!
 Oh! yet again! my son and daughter gone,
 And tell not me the cause o' this, their flight.
 My brain grows hot, I can no longer bear it.
 Forbid his presence, too! O! I am distracted!
 If sleep will quiet me, I'll to the poppy,
 And with its juices drench these fev'rous lips!
 Yes! I ha' need of med'cine and of comfort!
 Again, my wits do wander: I'll retire;
 And lest the bleak winds battle with my head,
 I'll to my couch, and lay me on its pillow.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.—A WOOD.

Enter PASCENTIUS, FLAVIA *disguised*, and FOOL.

Pas. Speak, dearest sister, say, how fares it with thee?
 For those soft limbs were form'd for gentler usage;
 But cheer thee up, my Flavia; whilst I'm with thee,
 Thou must not faint: if there be comfort near,
 I'll seek it, and from out the tiger's jaw
 Tear forth its food; or if the thirsty lion
 Should stand betwixt me and the bubbling brook,
 This arm should find a passage to its heart.
 But an thou need'st nor food, nor element,
 Then will I sit and comfort thy sweet tears;
 And as the smaller stream doth oftentimes mingle,
 And add its nothingness to the vasty sea,
 So on thy streaming cheek will I let fall
 One pitying tear, one tender drop of sorrow.

Fla. Oh! gentle, excellent, most loving brother,
 It is my aching heart which thus o'ercomes me.
 Wretch that I am! what hath my mother done,
 That, lacking pity, I could leave her thus:

How can her drooping heart bear this sad shock?
Can her meek soul my father's rage encounter?
No, no! impossible! thus am I wretched.
Then O! you righteous and all-powerful Judge,
If human breath, with pure soul offer'd up,
Can touch you, or obtain your gentle hearing,
Behold a maiden for a mother sues,
And on her bended knees implores protection.
Let some kind angel, minister of mercy,
Pour on her wounded soul the balm of comfort;
And, in the place of overwhelming sorrow,
Let the dear plant of smiling joy bud forth:
And should she weep, then may her dewy tears
Be those of tender peace and charity.

Fool. By my troth, mine eyes did never water so before: sweet mistress, an thou hast charm'd thy Fool, methinks the choir o' angels needs must listen to thy prayer: and yet these underprops o' mine do sorely ache; and wherefore should they? for an I do eat, then am I loaded, and do bear it well; but now that I am empty, these porters wont carry me; this is strange, and needs more wisdom to unveil than lies in my poor, foolish brain.

Fla. Methinks, I'd sit and rest me here awhile.

Pas. Then to the shade of yon imperial oak
I'll lead thee; there thou calmly may'st repose:
Our honest knave the while shall sing a strain,
And sooth thy sad and secret melancholy.

Fool. Why, to be brief, good master, I needs would sing; but that gentle lady hath crack'd the strings o' my voice: an 'twill please you weep, marry I'll take the loudest pipe; and should I fail in giving entertainment, why then I'll to Paul's, and there, i'the presence of Bonner, be whipped for a slanderer.

Pas. I pray thee, Fool, do as I list.

Fool. Now, then, I'll pipe; but, by my troth, you seem sad, and needs will me to sing merrily well, an folly will please you, I'll to't straight.

FOOL *sings.*

A Fool must needs be merry,
 Lack, lack, and a well a day!
 And in his shoes must bury
 His sorrow, and all his care.
 Then is not the Fool's lot hard;
 Is not his mind sore treated;
 Do not his friends, of 's poor brains,
 Make physic for their senses?
 Then lack, lack, and well a day!

But in this our world, 'tis true,
 Lack, lack, and well a day!
 We our old friends change for new,
 When they no longer suit us.
 Then heigh-ho, poor dobbins all,
 Be sharp with men, I pray you;
 They bear the minds of fools indeed,
 Yet are but knaves, I tell you.
 Then lack, lack, and well a day!

Fla. Good, honest Fool, I do sincerely thank thee.

Fool. Nay, nay, say not so; an I had flattered, why then, perchance, I had merited this; but i'faith, gentle lady, he that says nought, save the bare truth, doth ofttimes meet but a bare compliment. But an you do flatter, methinks the compliment will savour more of untruth, than did the flattery; but thus it goes with our slippery world.

Pas. Who is it comes this way?

Fla. Let us retire;
 Perchance, it may be one of our pursuers.

Fool. An thou'lt listen awhile to me, I'll tell thee thou need'st not fear; 'tis but the post on 's way to your father's palace.

Enter Post.

Pas. Friend, thou outrunnest almost speed itself;
 Whither art bound?

Post. I am for London, sir.

Pas. Nay, stop one moment; I conjure thee, stop!
 Say what these tidings that demand such haste?

Post. That which my packets do contain.

Pas. An thou will tell me their contents, there's gold.

Fool. Now, i' troth, thou'lt unlock letters, packets, and all: look, look! the knave doth handle it with good grace! Sirrah, an thou play'dst on David's harp, thy fingers ne'er would move so glibly o'er the strings, as o'er yon gold. Dost hear me?

Post. Thy gold, indeed, doth please; it fills my purse; And though it should not, yet what matters it? I am well fee'd for telling that alone, Which every simple peasant soon must know. Then thus it is—Vortigern is accus'd Of the base murder of Constantius!

Fla. Heavens!

Post. Yea; and even now the princes marching hither From Scotland, with them bring a numerous army.

Pas. Alas! my father: yet, I do beseech thee, How know they this? Who was't instructed them?

Post. Swift messengers, despatch'd by friends to Rome: Further I know not—therefore, must away. [*Exit Post.*]

Fool. Go to, go to, I do believe thee: marry, an thou art humble, thy purse is somewhat prouder. Good sir, wer't not best we put on; I am faint at heart: marry, 'tis pity my wits did not fill their owner, as well as those who do beg them.

Pas. Let's on; and yet what course is't fit we take? The night doth throw his sooty mantle round, And robs us of the cheering light of day.

Fla. Oh! would this night could pluck my sorrow from me!

Or that the long, eternal sleep of death Would close life's wretched, weary pilgrimage.

Pas. Oh! sister, an thou lov'st me, grieve not so.

Fla. If charity be meek, e'en so will I; And where thou lead'st, resign'd I'll follow thee.

Fool. Marry! an you'll listen to a fool, perchance he may, for once, speak wisely.

Pas. Out with thy counsel, then.

Fool. Thus it is:—chance hath made me your Fool; and chance will now, that your Fool speak something like wisdom: marry, is not this the road to Scotland? Dost understand me?

Pas. Truly, I understand thee.

Fool. To't again:—what say'st thou o' joining the young princes on their march?

Pas. It is most wisely utter'd, my good Fool! Come, gentle sister; we'll to th' skirt o'th' wood, And find some cottage that may serve to night, As 'twere a palace.—All may yet be well. [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—AN ASSEMBLY OF BARONS.

Vor. To you have been explain'd our late despatches :
Say; did we not invite these princes home,
And tender them the crown? Yet do we find
They come with foreign aid and civil war,
To bear the sway and empire over us.
Can any present say why this should be?

1st Bar. No! they're the sons of our late king, 'tis true;
As such, the elder doth, by right, inherit
The crown and kingdom; and, in their defence,
Our lives, yea, and our very best heart's blood,
Were truly offer'd, which we now revoke :
And, since they tear the bowels of our land,
And come with blood and naked sword to court us,
We'll to the field; and when bright victory
Hath with the sacred laurel bound our brows,
The princes' heads in triumph shall be borne
Throughout our ranks; rebellion's just reward!

2nd Bar. Then are they traitors to their God and country.

3rd Bar. And as the crown is now untenanted,
'Tis fit the most deserving brow should wear it.

1st Bar. If any one there be that doth deserve it,
'Tis he that hath it even now in trust.

All. Then be it his!

1st Bar. Girt tight the drum, and sound yon brazen
trump!

Let it proclaim aloud our firm decree:—
Aurelius and his brother, both are traitors,
And 'gainst their mother country do rebel! [*Trumpet sounds.*]

2nd Bar. Nay; stop not there, but let them bellow on,
Till with their clamorous noise they shame the thunder;

And o'er the earth, and e'en to heaven, proclaim
Vortigern our king, our lawful sovereign!

Vor. The exigencies of the state demand
My quick consent; I, therefore, give it you.
And when the crown shall on my front be bound,
My faithful soul shall prize the sacred trust;
My arm be nerv'd to fight in its defence.

Barons. All hail, great Vortigern, of Britain King!

[*Trumpet sounds.*]

Vor. My lords, vain compliment would suit but ill
The present time; I, therefore, briefly thank you.
But, ere we part, I fain would crave your hearing:—
Our troops have now been long disus'd to war;
Yet, do not think I mean their fame to tarnish,
Or on a Briton throw the damned slur
Of shameful cowardice; no, my good lords!
But, though their ribs do serve as castle walls,
And fast imprison their strong, lion hearts,
Yet e'en the lion, when full gorg'd with food,
Will bask, and tamely lay him down to sleep;
Then in such sort, hath undisturbed peace,
And want of custom, (nature's substitute,
That changes e'en our very properties,)
Soften'd their manhood. Then 'twere policy
That we should court the Saxons to our aid.
This, too, will in our Britons raise the flame
Of bright and generous emulation.

Say, lords! doth this my proposition please you?

1st Bar. We do approve, and thank its noble author.

Vor. You, my good lord, then do I here depute,
Jointly with Catagrine, our second born,
That you with speed repair to Saxony;
Our eldest shall, at home, command the Britons:
Time needs your haste, therefore use no delay;
Your country calls, so, look you, quick obey. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A DISTANT VIEW OF THE SEA.

Enter AURELIUS and UTER, (with the Scottish army,) as just disembarked, habited as Britons.

Aur. O, dearest soil! bless'd mother earth! hail to thee!
Fain would my feet play wanton on thy breast,
And skip with joy to tread thee once again.
'Tis not to wound thee that I thus do come,
In glitt'ring steel, and dire array of war,
But as my right to claim thee for mine own.

Uter. Brother, each lip for thee sends forth a blessing;
And, with the smile that buds on ev'ry face,
Alike expands a ray of happiness.
Never did I before blame nature's work;
But now I fain would quarrel with her hests,
For that in me she caus'd a lack of years;
Else had these prayers, these blessings all been mine!
To have a crown and kingdom at command
Is but as dross; but thus to have them come,
Might from their airy beds the angels draw
To taste the joys of this our mortal earth.
Throughout the camp now all is hush'd in silence,
And Morpheus, with his leaden wings outspread,
Hath on each eyelid laid the weight of slumber. [*Exit.*

Aur. Then, as the general, the task is mine
To thank that mighty God, whose name alone
Doth carry awe, and strikes the soul with fear.
Here prostrate, then, I fall before thy face;
And, tho' unworthy of thy mercy, pray:—
If giant form doth more enlarge the mind,
Would that my front did with the mountains vie;
That so my heat-amazed brain might work
Thoughts suiting more this vast immensity!
O! most expanded—O! most fertile mind!
When thou wouldst copulate with thoughts like this,
Thou art mere nothingness; or when the lips

Do pour forth boisterous and high sounding words,
 They back again to the poor mortal brain,
 And scoff at thy presumption.

“ O, God! why should I, a mere speck on earth,
 “ Tear thousands from their wives, children, and homes!
 “ O! wherefore, from this transitory sleep,
 “ That now doth steal from them their inward cares,
 “ Should I send thousands to cold, dreary death?
 “ ’Tis true, I am a king, and what of that?
 “ Is not life dear to them, as ’tis to me?
 “ O! peasant, envy not the prince’s lot;
 “ Thy page in life’s great book is not foul charg’d,
 “ And like to ours besmear’d with dying breaths.
 “ O! had I lives myself enough to answer
 “ The ravenous and greedy jaws of death,
 “ That will on these, my friends, my soldiers,
 “ Such havoc make, and wanton gluttony!
 “ Father of mercy, spare, O! spare this blood!
 “ And if I must alone receive the crown,
 “ Bedeck’d with purple gore, I here resign it.” [Exit.

SCENE III.—GATES OF LONDON.

Enter CATAGRINUS, HENGIST, and HORSUS, with Saxon troops, in grand procession.

Cata. Here halt we then, and let the trumpet sound.

[*Trumpet sounds. Officer appears on the walls.*

Off. Say, be ye friends or foes?

Cata. My father sent us hence to Saxony;

Go, say our embassy is now fulfill’d. [Trumpet sounds.
 Yet soft, that sound proclaims his quick approach.

Heng. Throughout the ranks let each man be prepar’d,
 To hail our new ally, King Vortigern.

SCENE IV.—GATES OPEN.

VORTIGERN *appears in robes of majesty, followed by the Barons and British troops.*

CATAGRINUS *kneels to VORTIGERN.*

Vor. Rise, my dear son! thou'rt welcome home again:
And you, brave Saxons, greet we to our land.

Heng. We come, great sir, to fight in thy defence,
And from thy kingdom wipe away rebellion.

Vor. Give me thy hand, brave general; and with it,
Exchange we mutually a soldier's faith.
Here let our British troops in friendship join,
And with the Saxons share our present joy, [Exeunt.

SCENE V.—THE COUNTRY.

Enter FLAVIA, PASCENTIUS, and FOOL.

Pas. Why, sister, thus should grief usurp thy cheek?
O mingle not so much of lily die
With thy sweet, rosy blood: thou'rt cold as death:
Pine not in silence thus!

Fla. I'll sit me down and court sweet music's aid.

She sings.

She sang, while from her eye ran down
The silv'ry drop of sorrow;
From grief she stole away the crown,
Sweet patience, too, did borrow.
Pensive she sat while fortune frown'd,
And smiling woo'd sad melancholy.

II.

Keen anguish fain would turn her heart,
And sour her gentle mind;
But charity still kept her part,
And meekness to her soul did bind.
She bow'd content,
Heav'd forth one sigh,
Sang, wept, then turn'd to melancholy.

III.

Careless her locks around her hung,
 And strove to catch each dewy tear;
 The plaintive bird in pity sung,
 And breath'd his sorrow in her ear.
 Amaz'd she look'd,
 And thank'd his care,
 Then sunk once more to melancholy.

Pas. O! why sing thus? thou dost join wo to wo:
 Thy grief, methinks, demands more cheering notes.

Fla. Oh! brother, this strange frame that keeps in life,
 Is almost sick and weary of its tenant,
 Tho' short hath been its course, yet fickle fortune
 Hath with it wanton made, and blown it
 To and fro, a toy for this remorseless world.

Pas. Listen, I pray thee now, to reason's voice:—
 Were it not strange, if thou alone shouldst 'scape
 The numerous ills and buffets of the world?

Fool. I'troth, thou hast wisely spoken.

Pas. Dost think so, my good Fool?

Fool. Marry, ay, do I: an I'll tell thee why; thy speech
 hath not wearied the Fool; therefore, 'tis a wise speech.

Pas. Thou'rt, then, a judge?

Fool. Ay, and a righteous one, too: dost mark me? 'tis
 your Fool alone will make a true report.

Pas. I understand thee not.

Fool. The more's the pity. He that doth, or well
 speak, or write, will be praised by fools only: for look
 ye: envy doth sting those that have knowledge, and
 makes them fear lest their wise heads should be out-
 witted; therefore, again, 'tis your Fool alone that is your
 upright judge; cause, forsooth, his brains are not in
 plenty; but, those which he hath are at's own disposal.

Pas. This road, methinks, should lead us on our way
 To the prince's camp! Fool, go you on before.

[*As they retire, enter Captain and Soldiers.*]

Capt. Not quite so fast, good master: prithee, halt.

Fla. What, guards! O! brother, now we are undone.

Pas. Be calm, be calm! the troops are not my father's.
Wil't please you, sir, inform us whence ye came?

Capt. From Scotland, sir.

Fla. Then, O! good heav'ns protect me?

Pas. And who is your commander?

Capt. One whose merit
Outweighs whatever yet did breathe on earth.
If ye be Britons, as your looks bespeak,
Then show your wonted quality of justice:
Did ye not 'fore the awful face of heaven,
Proclaim Constantius as your lawful king,
When on his head, was pour'd the sacred oil?

Pas. But he is now no more.

Capt. Yet hath he two sons living,
Whose souls, for purity, I can compare
Unto this bright, this spotless canopy.

Pas. Are ye bound towards the camp?

Capt. We are; and if you're upright men, and true,
Thither you'll follow, and there wield the sword
For justice, truth, and your anointed king.
Yet, in this hallow'd cause, we would not force you;
But lead into the fold, with gentleness,
Each sheep that may, unknowingly, have stray'd,
And broke from out its bounds and flowery pasture.

Pas. Proceed, then, and we'll follow. Tell me, sister,
Doth not your heart beat high?

Fla. Yea, it swells so, this little breast, in truth,
Can scarce contain it.—
How shall we bear the meeting?

Fool. I troth, merrily, merrily, as I do. 'Tis true I am a
Briton; but, then, am I not a fool? And ne'er will I put
my folly to the test. Think'st thou, I'll risk my brains
for mine anointed king? Nay, nay; in this affair, mine
heels shall be my guide, and quick teach me the way to
run. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—A CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

Enter EDMUNDA and Attendants.

Edm. I will not to my chamber, then, I tell ye.

1st Maid. Beseech you, madam, to return again;
For so did your physician order.

Edm. Come hither, pretty maid, look at me well:
Now say, hath he so order'd it, or not?

1st Maid. Indeed, he hath.

Edm. Nay, get thee gone: a maid, and still so false!
Go to, live I not yet? Am I, then, call'd?

And hath my sweetheart, death, yet fondly clasp'd me:
Say, hath the heavy passing bell yet sounded,
And hail'd me to my snug and chilly chamber?

2nd Maid. Madam, I fear your reason wanders.

Edm. Ay, ay! I understand thee, it is flown;
My poor brain, alas! is sore distemper'd.
Sweet, sweet, come from yon branch, here's food for thee:
My pretty birds, come back, I will not harm ye;
My bosom, as your little nest, is warm,
And is as soft, ay, and full of comfort, too.
Nay, stop! it is too warm, come not! twill burn ye.

2nd Maid. My tears do flow for her so plenteously,
That I have left in me no power to help her.

Edm. O! you great gods! why pelt ye thus my brain,
And with your thunders loud, cause such dire outrage
Within this little ball—this, O! this nothing?
Tell me, high heaven! is this your justice?
Did I not nourish them: ay, teach them, love them?
Yes, little drops, oh! come, cool my poor face:
Speak! ay, ye come, I know, to say I did.
Now, please your highness, and what would you more?
Say, are not here a host of witnesses?
Longer, O! let me not detain the court;
For in such plenty they do now rush forth,
That you, sir, you who fill yon seat of justice,
Must throw away your gown, and swim for life.

1st Maid. Will't please, we lead you in?

Edm. I'gin, indeed, to think I need support;
For I am even weaker than a babe.
Hush! hush! come hither both, I'll tell ye something.
Now, then, your ears; I'm mad: ha! ha! ha!
Say! is not this Whitsuntide?

2nd Maid. Ay, an't please you, madam.

Edm. Then, listen.

She sings.

Last Whitsunday, they brought me
Roses, and lilies fair;
Violets, too, they gave me
To bind my auburn hair:
But, then, my face look'd smiling,
'Cause that my babes were near;
Now yon stinging nettle bring,
'Twill better suit this tear.

How like you this?

1st Maid. Excellently well, madam.

Edm. The time has been, when thus thou mightst have
said,

What, must these poor eyes never see them more?
And have I need of these vile rags? off! off!
I'll follow ye to th' extreme point o'the world;
And, naked, bear the icy mountains cold,
And the dread scorches o'that ball of fire,
Till I have found them i'the antipodes;
Should I not meet them there, I will rail so!—
Pardon these starts! in troth I will not harm ye;
Indeed, indeed, I'm wrong'd! most sadly wrong'd!
Did these my warblings charm ye? then I'll die;
For look you, maiden, I'll sing sweeter far,
Than dying swan at ninety and nine years!
Lack, lack, a day! I'm faint! your arm, sweet maid.
There is my gage, farewell: good night, sweet! good
night!—

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—AURELIUS' CAMP.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, PASCENTIUS, *and* FLAVIA.

Aur. You, then, escap'd, disguis'd in man's attire ?

Fla. 'Tis true, I did; but ne'er hath rapier yet
Adorn'd a side less fitting to support it.

Aur. To you, Pascentius, my best thanks are due.

Pas. Nay, nay; 'tis little that to me you owe.

Fla. Indeed, but for his aid, I long, ere this
Had broke my sacred vow, and wedded death.

Uter. Brother, the enemy is near at hand;
Straight let us forth, and range our troops for battle.

Aur. Go you before, and swift I'll follow.
Now to thy care, my dearest friend, I trust
Thy beauteous sister, and my sweetest love.
Should victory proclaim the day our own,
All will be well; but should the loss be ours,
To heav'n's just guard I must resign you both.
Two trusty servants have I plac'd without,
Who will conduct you westward of our camp:
If we be beaten, thither we'll retreat.
Haste! fare thee well, sweet love.

Fla. This token let me brace around thine arm,
Think of me in the field, nor let revenge
Blot from thy gen'rous breast all sense of pity.

Aur. O! cruel fortune, so soon to wrench from me
This lovely form; to steal thy beauteous hand,
And offer to my grasp this weighty steel. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—THE CAMP OF HENGIST.

Enter HENGIST *and* HORSUS.

Heng. Have Vortigern's brave sons yet ta'en their station?

Hor. Yea, to our right the Briton's strength is form'd.

Heng. Then, bid them wait the enemy's attack. [*Exit Hor.*
 Now, O, ye gods! prove to my pray'r propitious,
 And yield me but the victory this day.
 A mightier force I've summon'd to this isle,
 And with them my fair daughter will arrive.
 If, then, her beauty catch this vicious king,
 E'en as mine own I'll hail the fertile land,
 And these brave Britons, by my arts and arms,
 Bind to a foreign yoke.

SCENE III.—A WOOD.

*Enter Britons and Saxons; they encounter the Scots, and after
 a hard contest, the Scots are defeated.*

Enter AURELIUS and UTER.

Aur. O, brother! fortune frowns, the day is lost.

Uter. But it hath cost them dear!

Rally, then, our troops, and march them towards the west.
 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD.

Enter FLAVIA and PASCENTIUS.

Pas. Be of good cheer; tho' they have lost the day,
 Yet was the victory most dearly bought:
 The Scots, too, in good order, have retir'd.

Enter HORSUS.

Say, what's thy business in this bloody field,
 And who's the maid that bears thee company?
 It should seem, that thou hast fought and conquer'd;
 And hast, in triumph, seiz'd on this fair prize.

Pas. I, sir, am her protector.

Hor. If thou'lt resign her, here is gold for thee.

Pas. Although my peasant habit, shows me poor,
 Yet covers it a soul that boldly scorns thee:
 I am a Briton, sir, will that suffice thee?

Hor. Vile stripling! dost thou know me?

Pas. I do not.

Hor. Thou shalt repent this!

Pas. Approach her not, if yet thou lov'st thyself.

Hor. Thy lack of years doth save thee from my wrath:
Thou beardless boy, who thus doth ape the man,
Once more, I tell thee!—

Fla. O, Pascentius! O, my brother!

Pas. Fear naught, he shall not harm thee, gentle Flavia.
(*To Horsus.*) Insolent, presumptuous slave! what wouldst
thou?

Hor. I'll make thee dearly answer for thy rashness.

[*They fight, and Horsus falls.*]

Oh! I am wounded! speak, what is thy name?

But thou art brave, and I forgive thee this:

Good youth, approach, I fain would tell thee something:

But O! I'm faint, death's cold and heavy hand

Doth rest like ice upon my parting soul.

Go to the king, I pray thee,

Bid him beware of Hengist.

[*Dies.*]

Pas. I now lament the deed that I have done.

Fla. O! sadly doth repentance sit on us.

Pas. How soon this lord of the creation dies;
The errant'st coward now may spurn him!

Fla. Sure, he did make some mention of our father,
And bade us tell him to beware of Hengist.

Pas. Something, methinks, he spoke to that effect:
This, must our parent know.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—A WOOD.

Enter HENGIST and Officer.

Heng. Hath Horsus yet been found?

Off. Thrice has the field, with greatest care, been search'd;
But all in vain.

Heng. Then, have I lost my first, my dearest friend:
If he be slain, by the great gods I swear,

I will revenge him on these Scottish-men.

But, whither are the princes now retir'd ?

Off. Towards Badon Hill.

The day was bloody, and it cost us dear:

The Scots were firm, and fought us, man to man :

Four thousand souls have perish'd.

Heng. Good heav'ns !

Enter another Officer.

What's thy business ?

2nd Off. Fourteen thousand troops have join'd our army,
And with them your fair daughter;—look, she comes !

Enter ROWENA.

Row. (*Kneeling.*) O ! joy once more to see my father's
face.

Heng. Rise, rise, my child !

Row. First with my kisses let me dew this hand,
And round a father's neck these arms entwine.

Enter Soldier.

Sold. From London, Vortigern is on his march ;
And comes, in haste, to greet your late success.

Heng. 'Tis well ! go straight, put all in readiness.
Retire ! I would be private with my daughter.

Off. We obey, my lord. [*Exeunt Officers.*]

Heng. Daughter, thou heard'st but now o'th' King's
approach.

Row. Your officer so express'd it !

Heng. True ! and dost hear, much rests with thee to act.

Row. If aught, dear father, my poor services
Can aid thee, but command, and I'll obey.

Heng. Thus then it is :—I shall prepare a feast,
And greet the King with joy and merriment.

Women, I know, have very many ways,
And subtle traps, to catch the hearts of men :

So practice all your wiles to win his love.

Row. But should I fail ?

Heng. Nay, fear it not; his nature well I know.
Come to my tent, and there we'll weigh this business.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—A MAGNIFICENT FEAST.

VORTIGERN *on a Throne.* HENGIST, WORTIMERUS,
CATAGRINUS, *Lords and Ladies, with Attendants.*

Vor. To mirth we dedicate this noble feast!
And you, brave Hengist, do we greet withal.

Heng. O! my most gracious King, I am unworthy.

Vor. Thou didst fight manfully, and bravely conquer.
Wine there! a health to Hengist! would that Horsus
Were here to grace the feast.

Lords. The King doth drink.

Heng. Thou sentest for me, noble sir, to fight;
I have done naught, save that I promis'd:
Had I play'd other than the soldier's part,
Then had I tarnish'd the true Saxon name.

[*Hengist speaks to one of the Lords aside.*]

Vor. Thou, Hengist, at our hands, hast well deserv'd;
We will consider, and reward thy labours.

Enter ROWENA.

Ye heavenly powers! what lovely maid is this,
Whose form might raise the blush in Dian's cheek?

Heng. Rowena, sir; my daughter, and your slave.

Row. (*Kneeling.*) All hail, great King!

Vor. O! thou most lovely maiden!
Here let me pledge thee in this golden cup.
On its smooth brim, I pray thee, print a kiss,
That so I may inhale the roseate sweets,
And taste the nectar of those vermil lips.

[*Takes the cup and drinks.*]

This seat is empty; fair Rowena, take it:
Would it were that Jove's haughty wife doth grace!

Cata. It is Edmunda's place; the queen's, our mother's.

Vor. Peace! she is unworthy of that station.

Wort. She, sir, is our queen; and, though not present,
Most righteously, the law awards it her's.

Any usurping it, doth break the law.

Vor. How! do ye murmur? Must I then humble,
And stoop the neck to bear my children's yoke?
Begone, I say! lest that my present wrath
Make me forget the place by blood I hold,
And break the tie 'twixt father and his child.

Wort. We shall retire, my lord.

Vor. Here sit, fair maid! if I presage not vainly,
Thou shalt, ere long, by right assume this place.

Row. How can I merit love of such a King?
A humble vassal only.

Vor. Thy meekness and sweet looks have won my soul.
O! let thy tongue here title me thy lord!

Row. Already, sir, have I avow'd you King.

Vor. And, therefore, here I do proclaim thee Queen.
Good Hengist, speak! wilt thou consent hereto?

Heng. My lord, that honour is too weighty.

Vor. Then speak, my lords: what say ye to my choice?
True, I am married, and my wife doth live;
Yet none, methinks, by law, can here be bound,
When the dread wrath of heaven doth show itself,
And on a wedded wife pours madness down.

1st Lord. The law, methinks, should, then, proclaim it
void.

Vor. Be it, then, void: and here I pledge myself,
To take this lovely maiden to my wife.
To thee, good Hengist, we resign all Kent,
As a sure earnest of our future bounty:
Proclaim it in the camp; and let each man
Receive in largess, from our royal coffers,
That massy ore, which long hath lain entomb'd,
And now shall well reward the soldiers' toils.

2nd Lord. The law allows not this; it is not justice.

3rd Lord. That power lies in the barons, not the
King.

Vor. What! dare ye, then, dispute it?

All but 1st Lord. We do.

3rd Lord. And while the power remains that's vested
in us,

We ne'er will countenance a vile injustice,
That tramples on our country's dearest rights.

Vor. Take heed, lest this your rashness ye repent.

[*Exeunt Lords.*]

SCENE closes. VORTIGERN comes forward.

Vor. O! these vile, petty kings, do make more uproar,
E'en than, above, the thund'ring god himself.
To-morrow be the nuptials loud proclaim'd:
And that Guorongus, that proud lord of Kent,
Who boldly in our presence call'd for justice,
His lands, his property, and all his titles,
We here invest with Hengist and his line. [*Hengist bows.*]

Vor. to Row. Give me thy hand; let us retire, my
Queen! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—AN ANTI-CHAMBER.

Enter WORTIMERUS and CATAGRINUS.

Wort. Shall we, in quiet, tamely suffer this?
See our most excellent, most gentle mother,
In bold defiance of all sacred laws,
Thus basely treated?

Cata. Do they, then, think our substance form'd of flint?
Or that our hearts are adamant itself?

Where is our brother?—where our dearest sister?
I fear, indeed, they had just cause for flight.

Wort. Let's to the princes, and our troops will follow.
They like not the rude treatment of these Saxons!

Cata. I do accept thine offer.

Enter Lords.

2nd Lord. Most gentle princes, whither are ye bound?

Wort. To quit oppression, and to seek for justice.

3rd Lord. Under your banners, then, we do enlist.

Cata. Speak! what hath now been done, that thus ye quit
Your king, your country, and your weighty trust?

2nd Lord. The King, on th' pretext of malady,
Most basely hath divorc'd your mother from him;
And means to take Rowena to his wife.

Wort. Gods!

2nd Lord. And, her proud father, Hengist, to enrich,
He hath despoil'd me of mine heritage;
And from my sweet, my lovely babes, cut off
Their rights, and ta'en from me my vast estate.

Wort. Then, look you, quick repair towards our camp;
Thither, in secret, we'll convey our mother.

So, fare ye well, good lords. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, PASCENTIUS, *and* FLAVIA.

Aur. Though bloody battle calls us forth again,
I'll rather part with life, with all on earth,
Than leave thee, Flavia, unprotected.

Uter. Hengist hath pitch'd on t'other side of Badon:
The noise of arms, and distant hum of soldiers,
Bespeak their hasty preparation.

'Twere best to attack them early in the morn.

Aur. Then be it so.

Pas. And yet I must not 'gainst my father arm!

Fla. Indeed, thou'dst arm against thy sister, too!
Who would protect me, then, or calm my fear?
Who sit, and tell me tales of hope? O! no one.
It were too much; you cannot, must not, leave me.

Enter Officer.

Off. Two sons of Vortigern do crave admittance.

Enter WORTIMERUS *and* CATAGRINUS.

Wort. My brother and my sister here!

Cata. O! joy unthought of! oh! unlook'd-for bliss!

Fla. Say; speak! how fares it with my gentle mother?

Wort. Beseech thee, ask me not of her sad story.

Fla. Sad, say'st thou? Heav'n forefend! she is not dead?

Wort. Calm thyself, dear sister, she lives still.

Fla. O! where, where? tell me; that, with these moist
tears,

I may rain comfort on her wounded soul.

Wort. Let us retire.

SCENE IX.

*Enter the Saxon and British Armies; they fight, and the
Saxons are routed.*

Enter HENGIST and Officer.

Heng. All, all is lost! Fly, fly, to the king's tent!

Bid him to London speedily repair.

Away, away! tarry not, on your life.

A curse upon his sons for quitting us!

Should they but follow up this victory,

My hope, my every wish, for ever's blighted.

Enter WORTIMERUS.

Heng. Vile traitor to your liege King and your Sire!

What blasted fiend, blacker than hell itself,

Could prompt thee to this damned treachery?

Wort. Canst thou, base Saxon! thou, base braggart,
ask it?

'Tis thou, and on thy soul, I'll prove it so.

Heng. Ask where's thy queen, and then I'll answer thee!

Wort. Dares thus thy tongue, with notes unmannerly,
My heart-strings tear asunder? Fiend, have at thee!

[They fight, Hengist falls.]

Heng. Thine hand be wither'd for this fatal blow.

And must, then, all my hopes lie buried here?

Wort. Yea; and thou need'st not much of Kent's domain;
A little mole-hill now will serve.

Heng. Yet, chance one lives, that may avenge this deed.
'Tis the brave Horsus; 'tis my noble friend!

Wort. He fought his last.

On him were found the secrets of thy plot.
Wouldst thou not have enthrall'd my countrymen?
Was not thy daughter to have basely poison'd
Her king, and husband? and, then, wert not thou
To have seiz'd the crown? O! villain, villain! traitor!

Heng. Yea; all, had I but liv'd a little longer.
Hell, swallow me not up! nor ope thy jaws
So wide. The fiends do tug, and strain my heart-strings!
They burst, they crack!—Oh! curs'd ambition! Oh! [*Dies.*]

Enter CATAGRINUS.

Cata. All, all is ours: the ranks are broken!—
They fly before us; come, let's follow them.
Good heav'ns! who's this? [*Looking to the body of Hengist.*]

Wort. Hengist himself.

Cata. And was it thou didst slay the monster fell?

Wort. Ay, marry; but he fought, indeed, like one
That begg'd a little time to save his soul.

Cata. Our father hath towards London ta'en his flight:
But yet, Rowena is our prisoner.

Wort. That's well, indeed: come, let us on, and join them.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE. X.—VORTIGERN'S PALACE.

Enter VORTIGERN and First Baron.

1st Bar. Speed, my most gracious lord! think on your
safety.

They course your troops, and dreadful is the carnage.

Vor. Where are my sons?

1st Bar. Let not your tongue curse me when I shall say.

Vor. Speak, quick!

1st Bar. With all their troops they join'd the enemy,
And bore with them their mother.

Enter Officer.

Vor. Well, sir; and what more tidings do you bring?

Off. To London's lofty walls they've follow'd us.

Vor. I care not an' they follow'd to the grave.

Speak, vassal! coward, speak! where is Rowena?

Off. Alas! I fear me, sir, she's ta'en a prisoner.

Vor. Then all, indeed, is lost!—Thou sweetest death!

Bury but in this bosom thy fell dart,

And I will bless thee for the gentle deed.

Off. Shall I go forth, my lord, and man the walls?

Vor. Do as thou wilt.

Good friend, I'd speak with thee.

Off. What, sir, are your commands?

Vor. Thou art an old, and ever faithful servant.

Off. My means have not kept pace with my desires.

Vor. I know thee well. Wouldst thou not serve me, friend?

Off. Ay, my good lord: but put me to the test,

And you shall see me smile on death himself.

Vor. I take thee at thy word. Hold here my sword,

And but one friendly office render me:

Flinch not, strike deep and home: there lies my heart.

Off. O! if each drop that were to issue from thee,

Was a most costly jewel, and the whole

Were my reward, by heav'n I would not do't!

Vor. Thou coward! what, afraid? O! shame, fie on't!

Off. Consider, sir, your queen yet lives.

Vor. My friend, thou'rt in the right. To arms, then,—out.

Bring me my burnish'd shield, my weighty axe,

And man the northern gate; let every bell

Sound forth its brazen peal, until they rouse

Our tomb'd fathers from their silent graves,

To come and aid us at this pinch of time:

Ring till the very steeples totter down.

Mark well my orders; he that flinches, dies.

If aught of murmur's heard, choak it with death.

Away, away! the grave or victory!

ACT V.

SCENE I.—APARTMENT IN VORTIGERN'S PALACE.

EDMUNDA *on a couch.*

FLAVIA *and* PASCENTIUS.

Soft Music.

Edm. Indeed, my gentle maid, indeed, thou'rt kind,
And by those tears that glaze thy lovely eyes,
'Twould seem, that truly, thou didst pity me.

Fla. Pity thee, O, gods!

Edm. Nay, wherefore, weep ye both;
'Tis long, long since I was thus kindly treated:
Your pardon, but I fear you scoff me.

Pas. Doth she yet know you?

Fla. Would to heaven, she did!

Edm. And yet there was a maid that once did love me:
Heigho! she went alack! I know not whither:
Thou ne'er didst see her; else what I shall say,
Methinks, would make thee vain; but yet, indeed,
Thou seem'st right well to ape her pretty manners.

Fla. O! 'tis too much; I cannot bear all this.

Edm. Nay, nay; why shouldst thou wail and tremble so?
Till this, I thought that grief was only mine;
It is not fair to rob me of all comfort.
I thought thee honest; but, indeed, the world
Doth flatter, fawn, and stroke upon the face,
And sadly censure when the back is turn'd.

Pas. O! dearest mother, say, dost thou not know me?

Edm. Ay, ay, right well; thou'rt one by name, a man:
Thy form is well enough, and thou may'st pass;

But, hast thou a heart for melting pity?
 For better be a brute,
 Than lack it under that most godlike form:
 And yet I do thee wrong; for even now,
 Thou didst add graces to that manly cheek,
 With scalding tears: and for whom do you this?
 For one that neither asks, nor merits it.

Enter WORTIMERUS *and* CATAGRINUS.

Wort. How doth she now?

Pas. Alas! she wanders yet: her mind's diseas'd.

Fla. I am that maiden lost, your loving daughter.

Edm. Bring here my glasses, stand before me here!
 Now, now, I'll judge thee well; I'll see this straight:
 And first her look was mild—in this thou'lt do;
 Then she was kind, most excellent, and good;
 Well, and so seemest thou. Now for the last:
 O! her heart was—but thine I cannot see;
 There thou deceivest me: I know thee not.

Yet, if thou be my daughter,

On thy forehead is a mark—

Away, then, with those locks from off thy front—

Now, let me look! O, gods! 'tis she, tis she!

Pas. She faints, she faints! this shock is too afflicting
 For such a shatter'd and disabled frame.

Fla. O! dearest, kindest, most beloved mother!

Edm. Indeed, my brain is something cooler now:

I should know you, sir, and you too; nay, all!

I'm very faint—alas! this joy o'ercomes me!

Fla. Sweet mother, you need rest; we'll lead you in.

Edm. Then be it so; and wilt thou sit and watch me?

Fla. Ay; and I'll kneel and pray, and sometimes weep.

Edm. Lead, then; I'll in to rest: come, follow me.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter AURELIUS *and* UTER.

Aur. The breach is made; the southern gate is forc'd;
 Yet still doth he hold out; and hath ta'en flight,
 E'en to the Tower, and there he'll wait the siege.

Uter. Aurelius, your fair prisoner, is no more.

Aur. How, say'st thou?

Uter. Rowena swallow'd poison, and is dead.

Aur. Then hath a wicked spirit ta'en its flight
From the most lovely frame that e'er was form'd,
To charm or to deceive. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—CÆSAR'S TOWER.

Enter 1st Baron and Officer.

Bar. Is the King yet safe?

Off. He is, my lord.

Bar. Are many troops with us?

Off. Two thousand, full well arm'd; and braver men
Ne'er buckled on their limbs the glitt'ring steel.
O! what a sight it was to see the King!
No sooner had he reach'd the bridge, but firm,
And with a voice that rung each coward heart,
He hail'd them to come on. Here, then, he stood:
In his right hand griping his massy axe,
Whilst with the left he held the brazen chain;
Nor did he budge, until each hardy soldier
Safely within the walls had enter'd:
Then, waving thrice his cased hand in air,
And, with a nod that spread pale fear around,
And seem'd to animate his bloody plume,
Triumphantly, he bade them all defiance;
Then, slowly turning, with a horrid frown,
Soldiers! he cried, soldiers! break down the draw-bridge.
Like hail, in flight, we pour'd on them our arrows,
Until their blood had stain'd the moat around us—
But look, my lord, here comes the King.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Why stand ye here, like fools, catching the air?
What! think ye this to be your mistress' chamber?

Bar. My gracious prince, we wait your orders here.

Vor. Then fight, I say.
Go, get you hence.

Bar. I'm all obedience.

Vor. No, no; thou must stay here: thou'rt my sole
prop.

I sicken fast, and 'gin again to flag.
Pour forth, I pray thee now, some flatt'ring words,
For I am weary, and my lamp of life
Doth sadly linger, and would fain go out;
For, look you, my poor soul is sore diseas'd.

Bar. Courage, my noble sir.

Vor. Time was, alas! I needed not this spur.
But here's a secret and a stinging thorn,
That wounds my troubl'd nerves. O! conscience! con-
science!

When thou didst cry, I strove to stop thy mouth,
By boldly thrusting on thee dire ambition:
Then did I think myself, indeed, a god!
But I was sore deceiv'd; for as I pass'd,
And travers'd in proud triumph the Basse-court,
There I saw death, clad in most hideous colours:
A sight it was, that did appal my soul;
Yea, curdled thick this mass of blood within me.
Full fifty breathless bodies struck my sight;
And some, with gaping mouths, did seem to mock me;
While others, smiling in cold death itself,
Scoffingly bade me look on that, which soon
Would wrench from off my brow this sacred crown,
And make me, too, a subject like themselves:
Subject! to whom? To thee, O! sovereign death!
That hast for thy domain this world immense:
Church-yards and charnel-houses are thy haunts,
And hospitals thy sumptuous palaces;
And, when thou wouldst be merry, thou dost choose
The gaudy chamber of a dying King.
O! then thou dost ope wide thy boney jaws,
And, with rude laughter and fantastic tricks,
Thou clapp'st thy rattling fingers to thy sides:

And when this solemn mockery is o'er,
 With icy hand thou tak'st him by the feet,
 And upward so, till thou dost reach the heart,
 And wrap him in the cloak of lasting night.*

Bar. Let not, my lord, your thoughts sink you thus
 low;

But, be advis'd; for, should your gallant troops
 Behold you thus, they might fall sick with fear.

Enter an Officer.

Off. My lord! my lord!

Vor. Wherefore dost tremble thus, paper-fac'd knave?
 What news should make thee break thus rudely in?

Off. Indeed, indeed, I fear to tell you, sir.

Vor. Speak, vassal, speak! my soul defies thy tongue.

Off. Your newly married Queen—

Vor. Speak, what of her?

Off. My lord, she hath ta'en poison, and is dead.

Vor. Nay, shrink not from me now; be not afraid:
 There lie, my sword! and with it all my hopes.

Lord. Yet we may hope—

Vor. O! friend, let not thy tongue delude with hope:
 Too long against th' Almighty have I fought.
 Hope now is vain—I will hear none on't.

Off. Yet is the breach not made, and we are strong;
 Still we may out, my lord, and beat them off.

Vor. Can wicked souls e'er stand before the just;
 Can strength outweigh the mighty hand of God?
 No, no; never, never! O! repentance,
 Why dost thou linger thus to ask admittance?
 Thou com'st, alas! too late; thou'rt stale and nauseous.
 Where, where is now the good, old murder'd king?
 In fields of bliss, where guilty souls ne'er come.

Enter another Officer.

2nd Off. All, all is lost; the post is ta'en by storm:
 The breach is made; they pour in fast upon us.

* A *fac-simile* of the forged MS. of the above speech faces the title.

Vor. If it be so, then will I out and die :
 Now aid, ye gods ! but if ye will not hear,
 E'en, then, on hell I call again for succour !
 My friends have boldly stemm'd this tide of war ;
 And shall I flinch at last, and play the woman ?
 Let any but Aurelius meet my arm,
 And this my sword shall ope a gate so wide,
 That the imprison'd soul shall take its flight,
 And either seek the murder'd king above,
 Or down and join me in the pit below.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—THE BASSE-COURT OF THE TOWER.

*Enter AURELIUS and UTER.**Uter.* Where, brother, are the sons of Vortigern ?

Aur. I bade them with their gentle mother stay ;
 For much 'twould have offended righteous heaven,
 If, 'gainst their father, they had join'd with us.
 For here there always is a sacred tie,
 Which suffers not a son's uplifted hand
 To strike a father, be he e'er so vile.
 Did he not give him birth, and nourish him ?
 And when thy direst foe becomes thy slave,
 Say, shouldst thou use revenge ? No, rather shame him
 With pity and all-softening charity,
 Then on a golden bed thou lay'st thy soul,
 And art on earth a blessed angel.

Uter. Brother, I do commend thee for this deed ;
 Worthy a prince, worthy a Briton, too.
 But, come ! now for the tyrant Vortigern !

*Enter Officer.**Aur.* What's the news ?

Off. Th' ill-fated King doth flee tow'rds Cæsar's tow'r,
 While half his troops have fall'n into our hands.

Aur. Did ye obey mine orders ?*Off.* Ay, my good lord, in ev'ry circumstance.

Aur. Then Uter, look; you march towards that same tow'r.

Let me, ye gods! but meet with this vile traitor:
And should his soul not shrink beneath my sword,
Heav'n has no justice. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—THE GATE OF CÆSAR'S TOWER.

Enter Lord and Troops.

Lord. In, in! for they do scar our very backs;
And score us cowards in our hasty flight.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Give me another sword! I have so clogg'd,
And badged this with blood and slipp'ry gore,
That it doth mock my gripe. A sword, I say!

Lord. Here, here, my noble lord!

Vor. As with their bloods I stain'd my reeking blade,
From summit of the tow'r, the raven croak'd;
Th' heavy-wing'd crow did chatter o'er my head,
And seem'd to bear black laurels for this brow:
Yet, did not, erst, the sun-defying eagle
O'er the world-conquering Macedonian hero,
Flutter, and point his way to victory?
Then from thy jarring throat spit pestilence;
And, bird of hell, I'll take thee for my guide.

Lord. The troops are enter'd; please you follow them?

Vor. I love not to be shut in walls of flint:
My soul likes better this vast field of air.
Let them come on.

Lord. Consider, my dear lord; think of your safety.

Vor. Must we not die? then, wherefore in a door,
And rot with famine, and with pale-fac'd hunger?
No; 'twere better nobly fall, full-stomach'd,
Than linger out a six weeks' tedious siege.
Do as ye list, here firmly will I stand.

Lord. Is it your pleasure, then, they shall proceed?

Vor. Ay; e'en to it straight.
Nay, stop! why should all these be doom'd to death?
Mine is the crime, not theirs.

Enter AURELIUS.

Aur. Villain and traitor! at thy word I take thee.

Vor. Ah! thy face the semblance of thy father's bears.
Thine eyes do pierce, more than thy steel-clad arm.
Were fifty souls within that body cas'd,
Proudly I'd scorn them all: but, ah! thy looks—

Aur. Thou perjur'd wretch! thou most abhorred villain!

Vor. Prate on, prate on: 'tis true, I merit this.
But go not yet too far, lest, stripling boy,
You should, to indignation, fire my blood,
Which thou hast turn'd from out its wonted course,
And make it fall on thee.

Aur. Alike, I do defy thy rage and threat.
Where is my father?

Vor. Curse upon thee, thou grat'st my soul!
O! if around this tatter'd conscience, e'er
Did cling repentance, I now cast it off.

[They fight and pause.]

Nay, stand aloof, and hear me yet awhile.

Aur. I will not.

Vor. 'Twere better that thou didst, lest, waxing warm,
I rise, and pour upon thy unform'd limbs
That rage, which 'gins to swell within my veins,
And lay a double murder on my soul.

Aur. Come on; come on, I say!

[They fight; Vortigern is thrown to the ground.]

Now, tyrant! now, I have thee in my power.

Vor. Dost think I'll blanch my face, and be a coward?
A lily coward? No! strike, then!
Ne'er will I crave thy mercy.

Aur. Now, traitor! where's my father?

Vor. Murdered!

Aur. And by whom?

Vor. Is not the crown thine own?

Aur. Ay; and is mine by right: then, speak, I say!

Vor. I will not, boy: hadst thou ten thousand voices,
And lungs of brass to give them utterance,
I'd not answer aught.

Aur. Then die!

FLAVIA rushes forward.

Fla. O! stop, Aurelius!—stay thy hand!
Remember, he is still my father!

Vor. My daughter, here! then curse the tardy blow,
That lingers thus performing of its office.
Strike, strike, I now beseech thee; for I'm sick,
And do abhor the very light of heaven.

Fla. O, mercy! on my knees I sue for mercy.

Vor. 'Twas I, 'twas I! this hand thy father murder'd.

Aur. And say'st thou this, e'en to my very face?

Vor. Ay, to thy face, and in thy ears I'll ring it,
Till thou for mercy's sake shalt strike the blow.

Enter WORTIMERUS, CATAGRINUS, Soldiers, Lords, &c.

Wort. What! my father?

Aur. My Flavia, for thy sake, I grant him life.

Vor. In charity, then, I pray ye bear me hence!

Aur. Ay, lead him toward the Friars.

Vor. Yea, where ye list; but, take me from this sight.

[*Vor. is led out.*]

Aur. How speeds Edmunda?

Wort. Her mind far better fares, yet is she feeble.

Aur. And of your father doth she e'er say aught?

Wort. Yea, truly; but she haply thinks him dead.

Enter UTER.

Uter. Of all, the King hath truly made confession.
To you he justly renders up the crown,
And bade me hail you Albion's rightful King.

(*All Kneel.*)

All. Hail to Aurelius,
Lawful King of Britain.

PASCENTIUS enters.

Pas. to Aur. Vortigern on thee bestows our sister,
And bade me, in his name, present her hand:—

Aur. Which thus I kiss; and, with the self-same breath,
Do hail her wife, and Britain's lovely Queen.

All. All hail to Flavia, Queen of Britain.

Aur. Much, we confess, we owe to all here present;
Each distinct service we shall well repay,
As best our dignity and state befit.
To-morrow, Lords, we'll meet at Westminster;
For your ripe ages and experience,
Must teach our young and giddy years the way,
To sow content after these dismal times. [*Curtain drops.*]

“FOOL comes forward.”

“Methinks, but now I heard some gentles say,—
“Where's master Fool? I'troth, he's run away.
“Right! for look you, when there's danger near,
“He, then, most courage hath, who most doth fear;
“Besides, observe, I came not here to fight,
“Let him that dares, say nay, I'm in the right:
“I will not out and risk a knocking down,
“For though I like our king, I like my crown:
“Besides, there is a time for Fools to play;
“But, then, they must have nought, save good to say.
“Chance, you will ask if this be tragedy;
“We kill, indeed, but still 'tis comedy:
“For none save bad do fall, which draws no tear,
“Nor lets compassion sway your tender ear:
“Play! grant it, then—the story ye have read,
“For 'tis well chronicled in Hollinshed.
“Now give your plaudits, and when that be done,
“Your Fool shall bow, and thank ye ev'ry one,”

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE LATE ROBERT MERRY, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MRS. JORDAN.

YE solemn critics! wheresoe'er you're seated,
To grant a favour, may you be entreated?
For which I'll pay you proper adoration,
And strive to please you—that is my vocation.
Then do not frown, but give due share of praise,
Nor rend from Shakspeare's tomb the sacred bays.
The scatter'd flow'rs he left, benignly save!
Posthumous flow'rs! the garland of the grave!
What, tho' he liv'd two hundred years ago,
He knew you very well, as I will show:
His pencil sketch'd you, and that seldom errs;
You're all, whate'er you think, *his* characters.
How!—do you doubt it?—cast your eyes around,
In ev'ry corner of this house they're found.
Observe the jolly grazier in the pit;
Why, he is Falstaff, fat, and full of wit;
In fun, and feasting places, his delight;
And, with his Dolly, emulates the knight.
Look at that youth, whose countenance of wo,
Denotes a tender-hearted Romeo!
He only wishes, tho' he dare not speak,
To be a glove to touch his Juliet's cheek!
While she, from yonder terrace, smiles serene,
And longs, with him, to play the garden scene.
But, O! I tremble now:—there sits a man,
Rugged and rough, a very Caliban!
He growls out his displeasure,—'tis a shame!
Do, dear Miranda! make the monster tame.
And you, my pretty Beatrice, don't fret,
Your Benedict is fond of a coquette.
For tho' he vows he'll think no more about you,
He means to marry—he can't live without you.
Kind faithful Imogenes are here, to charm us,
Mad Edgars, ancient Pistols to alarm us;
And Hotspurs, too, who seek the glorious boon,
“ To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon.”
Besides, we have our Touchstones, Shylocks dire,

Iagos false, and many a shallow Squire :
 Nay, there are ladies, who in their own houses,
 Are Desdemonas, plagu'd with jealous spouses.
 'Tis true, there is some change, I must confess,
 Since Shakspeare's time, at least, in point of dress :
 The ruffs are gone, and the long female waist
 Yields to the Grecian, more voluptuous taste ;
 While circling braids the copious tresses bind,
 And the bare neck spreads beautiful behind.
 Our senators and peers no longer go,
 Like men in armour, glitt'ring in a row ;
 But, for the cloak and pointed beard we note
 The close-cropt head, and little short great coat.
 Yet is the modern Briton still the same,
 Eager to cherish, and averse to blame ;
 Foe to deception, ready to defend,
 A kind protector and a gen'rous friend.

IN THE PRESS,

HENRY THE SECOND,

AN HISTORICAL DRAMA,

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF VORTIGERN, AND ATTRIBUTED TO

SHAKSPEARE.





